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The Pamphleteer;

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO

BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

VOL. X.

TO BE CONTINUED OCCASIONALLY,

AT

AN AVERAGE OF FOUR NUMBERS ANNUALLY.

Omnes pensantur eâdem
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SPEECH

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

GEORGE CANNING,

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 1817,

ON THE MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS

TO

His Royal Highness the Prince Regent,

ON HIS MOST GRACIOUS

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE:

ACCURATELY TAKEN IN SHORT-HAND;

AND

CONTAINING ALL THE PASSAGES WHICH WERE OMITTED IN THE DAILY PAPERS.

"Sit mihi fas audita loqui."

LONDON.

1817.

NO. XIX. *Pam.* VOL. X. A

SPEECH,

&c. &c.

IN addressing myself to you, Sir, and to the House, I must begin by claiming, for myself and my colleagues, to be considered as not less sensibly alive, than any of those Gentlemen who have taken part in this debate, to the distresses, and I must be allowed to add, to the perils of the country.

The importance of the crisis at which Parliament is now assembled, has been much dwelt upon by the Honourable and Learned Gentleman who spoke last.[1] Sir, I concur with the Honourable and Learned Gentleman in his estimate of that importance. That which, in many instances, has been little more than an ordinary form of speech, is now correctly and literally true. We have seen within the last few years, many important conjunctures in our national affairs: important was the crisis when Parliament determined, at the commencement of the late war, to arm the nation against foreign hostility and domestic treason; important was the crisis, when, after having won our way through a struggle of unexampled exertion and perseverance, we were suddenly called upon to make a new and unparallelled effort to preserve the prize and reward of our past achievements, which was about to be wrested from our hands;—but not less important, certainly, in the present crisis of domestic difficulty and danger, is the result of this night's deliberations, by which will be decided, whether we shall or shall not carry to the foot of the Throne, an unanimous expression of our determination to stand by It and by the Country.

[1] Mr. Brougham.

What is it, then, that so inopportunely interferes to prevent this most desirable unanimity? Doubtless there must be something in the proposed Address, which the Gentlemen on the other side of the House cannot adopt, without abandoning some principle by which their consciences are bound, or forfeiting some pledge which they have given to their Constituents. Were it otherwise,—in the present distracted state of the country, when unanimity is of so much importance, and when the appearance of a division in this House may be misconstrued out of doors for so much more than is really meant by it,—Gentlemen would unquestionably be most anxious to unite in a vote of unqualified affection and loyalty to the Crown. But what is the sense of duty that stands in the way of this concurrence? What is the mighty difference between the Address and the proposed Amendment? It is this: That the Address, echoing the recommendation in the Speech from the Throne, promises to institute an inquiry into the Income and Expenditure of the Country, with a view to every purpose of rational economy and practicable retrenchment; while the Honourable Gentlemen opposite think it better that the proposed Committee should be called a Committee on the State of the Nation! They are willing to concur with us in every other part of the Address; they concur with us in the principle and expediency of a prompt inquiry: but they differ from us in the name (for it is really nothing else) of the Committee to which it will be proposed to refer that inquiry: and for this trifling difference, the peace of the kingdom is to be exposed to the hazards which may arise from a misconstruction of this night's division.

The Honourable and Learned Gentleman opposite,[1] has expressed the indignation (that, I believe, was the word) with which he heard the speech of my Honourable Friend;[2] a speech which even the most fastidious critic might surely applaud as fair and impartial. My Honourable Friend is well known for the independent manner in which his speeches and his votes are directed, sometimes to this, sometimes to that side of the House; a manner the most conformable to the theory of a perfect Member of Parliament. But how little are those who clamour most loudly for independence, satisfied with the exercise of it when it happens to make against themselves! When my Honourable Friend's vote happens to be with Gentlemen

[1] Mr. Brougham. [2] Mr. Bankes.

on the opposite side of the House, then his opinions are conclusive, and his authority an infallible guide; but when his sentiments concur with those held on this side of the House, he is stigmatised as a man who does not dare to act upon his own views; as equally corrupt and servile with those who have actually enlisted themselves under the banners of the Ministry. I, Sir, have frequently had the misfortune to differ from my Honourable Friend, but I have never felt myself at liberty to call in question the independency of his opinions.

The Honourable Gentlemen opposite assume to themselves the exclusive merit of sympathizing with the sufferings of their fellow subjects,—to which the Government, forsooth, are callous and insensible! But, Sir, I will tell those Honourable Gentlemen, that His Majesty's Ministers have as deep a sense of the difficulties under which the several classes of the community labor, as any set of men, who aim at popularity by encouraging the complaints of the sufferers, and by dwelling with emphasis upon the severity of their distress. Perhaps, Sir, our sense of those difficulties is deeper and more afflicting,—in proportion as a more intimate knowledge of them is pressed from all quarters upon our attention; and as it is our duty, and God knows! our wish, to find, if possible, the means of alleviating them.

I do not hesitate to declare my opinion, that many of the causes of the present distresses are far beyond the reach of immediate remedy, as they are beyond the limits of human controul. Most anxiously and laboriously have Ministers devoted themselves to the consideration of the agricultural part of those distresses;—the relief of which, in the first instance, would undoubtedly be the source of gradual and diffusive amelioration to other classes of the community. Plans of such relief have been suggested, have been investigated with the most patient anxiety, and have been referred to the opinion of men best able to judge practically of their possible execution. But, unhappily, those inquiries have led to no satisfactory result. I appeal with confidence to an Honourable and Learned Gentleman opposite,[1] than whom no man is better qualified to form an opinion upon this question—whether the difficulties

[1] Mr. Preston, a Gentleman eminent in the Law, and author of an able pamphlet on the Distresses of the Country.

which impede the extension of public aid to the Landed Interest, have not been found, upon thorough discussion, to be altogether insuperable? I have said, *found* to be so;—because at the first view, a hope was cherished,—a hope springing from the desire,—that some practicable mode of relief might be devised. Yet, though these difficulties have hitherto been found insuperable, that circumstance will not preclude the application to them of any remedies which may hereafter be suggested, and which shall be deemed, upon examination, at once unobjectionable in principle, and likely to be practically beneficial.

The Poor Laws have been particularly referred to, as requiring immediate consideration. Undoubtedly they do so. And I did entertain a hope, when the Honourable Gentleman who opened the debate[1] to-night addressed himself to the House, that he was about to announce his determination to propose, that the Committee of last year, on that subject, should resume its labors. I trust that those labors will be resumed, and pursued with diligence. They furnish of themselves, sufficient occupation for one Committee, and could not be mixed conveniently with the matters to be referred to either of the Committees proposed this night,—whether to that on Income and Expenditure, or to one on the State of the Nation.

The Honourable and Learned Gentleman has qualified, to a certain degree, an assertion made last night by the Right Honourable Mover of the Amendment, that taxation is the *sole* cause of the distresses of the country. I confess, Sir, that I did expect from that Honourable and Learned Gentleman such a qualification; for I have very recently read an able and eloquent pamphlet,[2] (in this place I am not at liberty to describe it by any other name), published in the name of that Honourable and Learned Gentleman seven or eight months ago, which enumerates no less than about *thirteen* distinct causes of the existing calamities, of which taxation is only *one*.

In many of the statements and opinions of the learned and able writer I entirely concur;—particularly in the belief which he professes, that many, perhaps most, of these causes, are of a temporary nature. I agree with him also, that one of the most operative

[1] Mr. Curwen.

[2] Brougham's Speech on Agricultural Distress, 9th April, 1816.

causes of the stagnation of trade and manufactures, has been the withdrawing of Government, as a customer, from the market, both of labor and commodities. This undoubtedly is a correct view of the subject. And what is this, in other words, but that very "transition from war to peace," so justly asserted, and so rashly denied, to be of itself no insufficient solution of the main difficulties and derangements of the time?

But I find in the same publication another passage, so singularly at variance with a declaration which I have heard from the Honourable and Learned Gentleman this night, that I cannot forbear quoting the words of the pamphlet. The House has heard the Honourable and Learned Gentleman declare his astonishment, as well as his regret, at the progress of our affairs "from bad to worse," since the last discussions in Parliament upon the subject. But what said the pamphlet? What was said for the Honourable and Learned Gentleman in print seven or eight months ago? "Nor should I be at all surprized," said the pamphlet, "if things should grow worse before they grow better." Although, therefore, I can easily believe in the regret of the Honourable and Learned Gentleman at the present state of things, it is difficult to account for the expression of his astonishment. If the Honourable and Learned Gentleman was prepared for such a deterioration in the state of affairs last summer, surely the calamity which has since fallen upon us, in the badness of the harvest, could not but prepare him still farther for a result which he, nevertheless, seems disposed to represent as so extraordinarily and unexpectedly disastrous.

But, participating as we do in the regret which is felt at the distresses and sufferings of the people, and willing as we are to admit that a strict and rational economy, though it cannot immediately cure, may nevertheless contribute towards relieving them, what steps have the Government taken in pursuance of this admission? what burdens have we lightened? what retrenchments have we made? This, Sir, is not the fit occasion for entering into details: but thus much I will say, without anticipating the official statements which will very shortly be submitted to the House, that in the reductions which have been made in the Military Establishments of the Country, one principle of limitation only has been kept in view,—*Safety*. Men undoubtedly may differ in their application of this principle;

and it will be for the House to decide, when the details are brought before them, whether it has been properly applied or not to the various stations and services where our military force is distributed. With respect to our Foreign Possessions, the estimate is plain; Colonies have their price; and when you risk their loss, by depriving them of a force sufficient for defending them, you know what you risk: the amount of that risk is capable of valuation. But the safety of the kingdom itself has no price: it is inestimable: it must be guarded against all hazards, by all exertions.

This, then, is the principle on which the Government are prepared to propose the Military and Naval Estimates, and by which they desire to be judged, when those Establishments shall come into discussion. Having carried reduction as far as, consistently with this principle, they have thought practicable, it is, nevertheless, their intention to propose to vote those Estimates for a limited period only, so as that they shall be liable to revision before the end of the present Session of Parliament. This, I flatter myself, will show, both that a due and sober consideration has been given to the subject of reduction, and that the extent of confidence asked of this House, by the Ministers, is not unreasonably large.

I know, Sir, that we are accused of being unwilling reformers; and it is therefore contended, that no confidence whatever should be placed in our professions of economy. Sir, for one, I am not indisposed to allow, that the reductions and dismissals to which we are under the necessity of having recourse, do, in many instances, go against my feelings. An Honourable Gentleman,[1] who never speaks without making a deep impression by his eloquence and ability, truly observed, last night, that retrenchment is not an unmixed good. Such a process necessarily throws upon the world many meritorious and helpless individuals, who are added to the numbers of the distressed, and augment the mass of discontent throughout the country. In truth, those whose duty does not immediately call them to attend to the detailed application of the principles which we are all agreed in recommending, can have but a faint notion of the scenes of sorrow and suffering, which result from those very operations by which the public pressure is ultimately to be relieved. How many among the families of that mid-

[1] Mr. Lamb.

dle class which is generally, and truly, represented as peculiarly oppressed by the difficulties of the times, and in whose behalf the diminution of public expenditure is particularly called for; how many of those very families find their own particular difficulties sensibly aggravated, by the sudden throwing upon their hands of a brother, or a son, who had hitherto gained his own livelihood, and perhaps contributed something to their comfort, by an employment in the military or civil establishments of the Country! I state this not as an argument against reduction, but as an excuse for the frank avowal, that in cutting deep, it is impossible not to feel severely. I cannot shut my heart, any more than my eyes and ears, against the cries of individual disappointment, even though the inevitable consequence of measures directed to the general good. To this extent, I own, I am an unwilling reformer. But the necessities of the times admit of no alternative: reduction must take place. And though I allow the truth of an observation, (I think of Mr. Burke's), that "envy and malice would carve closer, and make cleaner work," I cannot believe that the House will feel it necessary to take the task of retrenchment out of our hands, merely because we are not guided in the execution of it, by any harsher motives than a sense of public duty.

Having thus generally put the House in possession of the principles upon which his Majesty's Government profess to act, in bringing down the Establishments of the Country; and referring for the proof and verification of these professions, to the period when the House will have an opportunity of comparing them with what has been actually done, I shall proceed to notice one or two detached arguments which have been urged against the Speech and the Address, before I touch upon those more important points, which are, in my opinion, entitled to the most serious attention of the House, as affecting most deeply the interests, the happiness, and the permanent welfare of this kingdom.

The Honourable and Learned Gentleman who spoke last, has adverted to the close of the American War, and has stated, that the imposition of fresh taxes, at the termination of that War, exhibits a striking contrast with the present abstinence from taxation. The statement is correct; but nothing ever surprized me more, than to hear the Honourable and Learned Gentleman draw from that

comparison, an inference to the disadvantage of our present situation. "At the end of the American War," says the Honourable and Learned Gentleman, "taxes to a considerable amount were imposed upon the people; *now*, we could not—we dared not—impose taxes." What *might* be done if necessary, it is happily beside our present purpose to enquire. That there exists no necessity, and that there is therefore no intention of imposing taxes, is the fact.

Nor is this all. At the close of the American War the permanent Revenue was not sufficient to support the permanent charge upon it. New taxes were absolutely necessary to meet that charge independently of the expences of our Peace Establishments. On the contrary, in the first year after the close of the late war, taxes to the amount of nearer one-third than one-fourth of the whole revenue of the country, have been at once remitted to the people, (no matter, for this part of the argument, whether by the voluntary proposal of Ministers, or from parliamentary compulsion—the remission has taken place) and not only is the permanent charge still amply provided for, but even for our Establishments provision is to be made in the second year of Peace, without any addition of burthen to the people. There are circumstances of distress enough, God knows! in our situation; but it seems a most perverse ingenuity, that can discover in the absence of any necessity for new taxes, a symptom of peculiar and aggravated distress!

I admit, Sir, that the situation of the Country, and the whole state of its Income and Expenditure, demand the most anxious investigation: but let this investigation, which has been earnestly recommended from the Throne, and which it is the anxious wish of Ministers to pursue with a view to bringing our Expenditure within the limits of our actual Revenue, be entered upon in a spirit of sober and impartial inquiry, and with a desire to do the best, rather than to prove the worst. In the progress of this investigation, the Government, as it willingly calls for the aid, so it humbly but confidently challenges the jealousy of Parliament. We claim support no farther than as we shall redeem the pledge given by the Speech to the Country.

The Honourable and Learned Gentleman is of opinion, that our distresses might have been much alleviated, if care had been taken,

in the negociation of the Peace, to procure stipulations favorable to British Commerce; if our military preponderance had been made subservient to the advantage of our trade. I confess, Sir, I was surprised to hear this opinion stated by a Gentleman who looks at subjects of this nature with a statesman's eye. I should rather have expected to hear him disavow and condemn the policy of sacrificing to commercial objects, either national glory in war, or national security in peace. The object of the war was a secure peace. Peace is the parent of Commerce. The positive stipulations of the peace were, therefore, wisely directed rather to its permanency than its profits. If the peace be, as I trust it will be, permanent, the prosperity of Europe will revive; and in the revival of general prosperity, can there be a doubt of the revival of that of Great Britain? Is it likely that, with our commanding mercantile navy, with our practised industry, our active enterprise, and accumulated capital, we shall be long behind other Nations in reaping the fruits of the Peace which we have secured to Europe?

There may, naturally enough, have been differences of opinion, such as the Honourable and Learned Gentleman intimates, as to the political settlement at the conclusion of the late triumphant War. It was a matter of great complication, difficulty, and delicacy. *We*, it must always be borne in mind, were not the sole arbiters of the questions to be decided, and the arrangements to be made. Of one thing, however, I think no doubt can be entertained, that it would have been most unwise to have hazarded disunion in the great Confederacy, for the sake of any exclusive commercial advantage to this country.

But the Peace, and all its arrangements, have already been fully discussed and solemnly sanctioned by Parliament. If our policy has been wise and generous, I have no fear (I confess) for any ultimate danger to our Commerce. Already there are indications, faint indeed as yet and unassured, of reviving credit and demand. A little longer suffering, a little more of endurance, and all may yet be well.

And this, Sir, leads me to those parts of the Speech and of the Address, which speak of the noble patience of the great body of the people: a point on which I think it the more necessary to touch, because, from a misapprehension (so I am confident it must

be) to me wholly unaccountable, the Honourable Gentleman[1] who opened the debate to-night, has found great fault with those very parts of the Speech and the Address, as accusing the people of disloyalty! If ever pains were taken to define any meaning explicitly, to draw distinctions accurately, and to preclude the possibility of misconception, it is in those passages, where the deluders and the deluded are distinguished from each other; where the artifices and instigations of the incendiary are contrasted with the quietness, the resignation, the good sense, and the loyalty of the people. The people at large are warmly praised, but not more warmly than justly, for the fortitude with which they have borne all their privations. But is it not notorious, that of their privations advantage has been taken, to endeavour (happily in vain) to excite throughout the country a general spirit of insurrection? It is asked, whether those persons who assembled to petition the Legislature, are to be considered as guilty of insurrection? Certainly not; but for the purpose of petitioning, is a waggon loaden with ammunition a necessary basis? Are fire-arms and tri-coloured flags the indispensable accompaniments of a resolution in favour of Parliamentary Reform? For myself, I can truly say, that I feel as much of compassion for those innocent, but misguided persons, whom their distresses expose to be the dupes and tools of every leader that addresses himself to their wants, their prejudices, and their passions, as I do of indignation against the perverted heads and hard hearts of those demagogues, who, far from sharing or relieving the sufferings in which they pretend to sympathize, retire to their own comfortable homes, from a drenched and starving auditory, after having irritated them to madness, and stimulated them to outrage, by inculcating Rebellion as a duty, and proscribing Charity as a crime! These, Sir, are the deluders, against whom the Speech denounces a just indignation. These are the proceedings, of which the Address calls upon us to express to the Throne our detestation and abhorrence; expressing at the same time our readiness to concur in every necessary measure of redress and retrenchment, that can afford relief to a patient and suffering people.

And for what object are these deluded persons instigated to insurrection, and what is the relief which they are taught to expect from its success? Why, truly, that panacea for all grievances—

[1] Mr. Curwen.

which is to feed the hungry, to reform the vicious, to instruct the unenlightened, to diffuse general ease, affluence, and contentment throughout all classes in the community—a "Reform in the Commons' House of Parliament!" An Honourable Baronet[1] has given notice of a Motion on this subject, which will of course afford the opportunity for an ample and detailed discussion of it. But as the Honourable Gentleman who opened this debate, and the Honourable and Learned Gentleman who spoke last, have expressed their opinions in favour of a Reform—though with reservations and qualifications which make those opinions more plausible, and therefore more dangerous—as there is an inquietude in the public mind upon this subject, agitating and painful in the extreme, and as I think it the duty of every man, standing in such a situation as I have the honour to fill, to be open and explicit with the Country upon a matter so nearly touching its tranquillity and welfare, I seize this opportunity of saying, that whenever the Honourable Baronet brings forward his Project of Parliamentary Reform, whatever it may be, I shall be ready to meet it—not with any temporizing opposition, not with any reasons of qualified objection or temporary expediency—I shall be ready to meet the proposal of the remedy with a direct denial of the grievance.

I deny the assumption, that the House of Commons, as it stands, is not, to all practical purposes, an adequate Representative of the People. I deny that it requires any amendment or alteration, to enable it fully to discharge the functions which are legitimately its province. I deny that there is any model, either in the theory or in the practice of the Constitution, to be traced in any period of our history, or to be found in our customs or our laws, from which model the House of Commons has degenerated, and according to which it requires to be reformed. I do not deny that theories more splendidly popular may be devised by speculative philosophers, or held up by designing men to inflame the imaginations of the multitude. I admit that, in erecting for the first time in other countries, a system of representative government, other bases might be found more adapted to *their* wants, habits, and feelings. But I contend, that our system, such as it is, has grown up with our freedom and with our power, and that it satis-

[1] Sir F. Burdett.

fies the wants, the opinions, and the feelings of the great bulk and body of the nation.

When I am told that the House of Commons is not sufficiently identified with the People, to catch their every nascent wish, and to act upon their every transient impression, that it is not the immediate, passive, unreasoning organ of popular volition, I answer, thank God that it is not! I answer, that according to no principle of our Constitution, was it ever meant to be so; and that it never pretended to be so, nor ever can pretend to be so, without bringing ruin and misery upon the kingdom. Against all such theories at once I take my stand. It is not as the mere organ of the people's will, but as the deliberative guardian of their rights and interests, that the House of Commons takes its rank co-ordinate with the other powers of the Constitution. Whenever it shall attempt to exchange this its sober and legitimate character, for the wide and wild prerogative which modern politicians claim for it, some new system of government, some strange variety of untried being, some monstrous growth, planted in inauspicious hour, watered with blood, and thriving amidst desolation, may take the place of the British Constitution: but the British Constitution will be no more! The name of England may remain: but it will no longer be *that* England—the model of rational liberty, the protectress of national independence, venerable in her domestic institutions, powerful in foreign exertion beyond the natural proportions of her physical force, whose "pigmy body," animated and o'er-informed by the spirit of her free Constitution, was strong enough to deliver Europe from the grasp of the oppressor; and whose greatness and happiness, whose freedom and power, the destruction of that Constitution can alone destroy!

I know, Sir, that we are told, that within the walls of this House no such preposterous plans are entertained, as those of Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage. Those obvious and acknowledged means of self-destruction, are disclaimed by the Reformers in this House. *They* do not mean to go so far. THEY *mean!* and much THEIR *meaning* signifies! Do they not know, that when they have once set the stone a-rolling, they can no longer controul its impetus and direct its course—that it will go on in its career, crushing every thing before it, and in the very earliest stage of its progress, crushing the Reformers themselves? Do they hope that

they can guide the whirlwind which they may raise? Or, are they not aware that mightier spirits are abroad, who will take that task out of their hands? Why indeed do we now first hear this anxious disclaimer of the extravagant doctrines of those whom the Honourable and Learned Gentleman has so mildly characterized as "visionary and fanciful theorists?" Why? but because the *moderate* Reformers already feel, that the "visionary and fanciful" are their masters! They have found that their own milk-and-water schemes will be rejected with scorn by those "visionary and fanciful theorists;" and that when they have toiled for their masters to the point at which their own projects of amelioration end, they will be dismissed with contumely from the service.

Can any man believe that the only wish of these persons is, that the House of Commons should do its duty better, remaining in the sphere assigned to it by the Constitution? No such thing. Is it not notorious, that there has not been one of the acts of the House of Commons which *they* have ever been known to approve? that they have never ceased to describe the last twenty years as a period of calamity and disgrace, and the support given by the House of Commons to the War, as in defiance of the sense of the Nation? And yet who does not know and feel this charge to be a falsehood and a calumny? Grant even, for the argument's sake, that the War was unnecessarily begun, or that it might have been more ably conducted; still is it not clear, certain, and recorded, that the Nation was united beyond all former example in the support of the War, from its beginning to its end? that if the House of Commons erred in this respect, it erred with the Nation? and that the select few who saw nothing of necessity in the outset of the War, and nothing of glory in its termination, who alone among their countrymen, have doubted the justness of our cause, and shut their eyes to the blaze of our victories, cannot impute the war to the House of Commons as a crime, without imputing it also as a crime to the people?

But these men it seems are "visionary and fanciful theorists!" Why, Sir, let us hope that they are no more: let us hope that their whole object is to mould and square the Constitution to some ideal model of perfectibility; and that, though (as is the nature of theorists) they would not, perhaps, suffer any consideration for established

institutions, for property, or for life, to stand in the way of their experiments,—such hazards are merely incidental to their plan,—that their only aim is theoretical perfection. But I confess I have my apprehensions that there is something much more *substantial* in these theories; that not only this House and the Government furnish matter for their fanciful speculation, but that in some of their waking visions, even the solid *Land* presents itself as an object of desire.

I know how easy it is to despise, or to affect to despise, daring and extravagant projects, announced and supported by comparative impotence and imbecility; but I know also, how dangerous it is to do so. France is the standing example of perils too lightly estimated in their beginning, and not resisted until they had grown to a strength which at once alarmed and overpowered resistance. The projects of innovation do not stop with Parliaments and Governments; the projectors would, in the end, shear property to the quick. This is no conjecture of mine; nor is it merely the day-dream of ignorant and illiterate men. The purpose is avowed: it is detailed and reasoned upon, in a pamphlet which I hold in my hand,[1] with no contemptible degree of intelligence and dexterity. There is nothing in the style which betrays an absence of literary acquirements. This pamphlet, as I have been informed, has been circulated with astonishing industry through the country. It contains the dogmas of a considerable Sect; considerable, I mean, from those circumstances which make sects formidable,—its numbers and its enthusiasm. Hear, then, the ingenuous Creed of these Patriots of the Soil! The great and crying evil of the time is, the "*usurpation of the Land, the gift of God, from the people.*" "*Landlords,*" it is stated, "*are the only oppressors of the people.*" "*All the land, the waters, the houses, the mines, &c. &c. must return to the people, the whole people: without the restoration of this property, Reforms and Revolutions are unavailing.*" Such is the substance; the matter is treated much at large, and, as I have said, with no inconsiderable ability; and the doctrine is disseminated with proselytizing zeal. Let then the Property of the Country be aware of the danger of countenancing the first breach in our Civil

[1] "Christian Policy the Salvation of the Empire. Published by Thomas Evans, Librarian to the Society of Spencean Philanthropists."

Institutions. It is not only against us, the corrupt House of Commons; it is not only against us, corrupter Ministers, that the wrath of Heaven is kindled, and the vengeance of the people denounced. The corruption of Parliaments and Ministers may be cured. Reform will dispose of the one, and Revolution of the other; but all in vain, all to no beneficial purpose, while the Land continues in "*usurpation*," and the "*property of the people*," is undivided and unrestored.

I have said that such projects are not to be despised: but let me not be supposed to represent them as too formidable. They will grow to be formidable only if overlooked. We must oppose the premises, if we would avoid the conclusion. Stand firm against the approach of innovation, and it will pause and falter in its career: and the earliest check is not only the most decisive, but the most humane.

Seasons of great national distress have ever afforded scope for the agency of doctrines tending to national confusion. These doctrines lie dormant during a period of prosperity; they come forth when calamity has prepared the public mind for the reception of the poison. God forbid that the distresses which produce this susceptibility, should be considered as permanent, or that the temper itself should be thought likely to survive them. I have no fear of either. Now is the critical moment of our fate: pass we but unhurt through the complicated difficulties of this moment, and a new course of happiness and prosperity may presently open before us.

The present circumstances, the present temper of the Country, are not the result of positive difficulties only. They arise in some degree from lassitude and prostration of strength, and from the cessation of that excitement by which we have been continually quickened and agitated during the last twenty years: a lassitude, occasioned by exertions necessary, God knows, in their origin, strenuous beyond all example in their progress, and glorious beyond all expectation in their result; an excitement, in comparison of which the even tenor of contented enjoyment would have been tame; but in contrast with which privation and suffering naturally create, and might almost justify, a momentary despondency. But we have not leisure to despond: we cannot indulge, without danger, a gloomy and

reckless repose. The festal blazes of the War are at an end; the sun of Peace is scarcely yet above the horizon; we must take care that during this cold and cheerless twilight, the spoiler and the assassin do not break in and destroy.

I cannot, I will not, join with those who despair of the fortunes of their country. Great, I admit, is the exhaustion, and severe, I lament it, is the distress. In this moment of exhaustion and distress, the enemies of England again send forth their terrible prophesyings, and pronounce her to be lost to herself and to the world. False prophets may they prove,—false prophets they *will* prove. The stamina of the Nation, I am persuaded, are unbroken; the heart, I am confident, is sound. It is not surely at the eve of dissolution, and as in the moment of lightning before death, that I see visions of future glory! But I cannot, I will not believe that the brilliant destinies of England are closed for ever.

> ——————Think you the sanguine cloud
> Rais'd by war's breath, hath quench'd the orb of day?
> — To-morrow he repairs his golden flood,
> And warms the nations with redoubled ray.

To wait with patience for the turn of these unprosperous times; to bear and to forbear; to endeavour to restore what Lord Clarendon, I think, somewhere calls, "the ancient good temper and good humour of the British Nation;" to abstain from hazardous innovations and experiments; to probe with a tender hand real grievances, with a view to practical remedy; to cherish the institutions and to foster the resources of the country; this is the course which Parliament has to pursue; and which pursued through this Session, painful and laborious as it may be, will, I have no doubt, enable us to look back with self-congratulation at the gloomy phantoms by which we are now discouraged and appalled.

And now, Sir, as to the vote of this night. Let me remind the House, that the Committee proposed by the Address is specifically pointed to its object; so much so, that if the Address had suggested a Committee on the State of the Nation, the Gentlemen who now propose that Amendment would probably have accused the Government of endeavouring to keep the true point of difficulty out of sight; and would themselves have called for the more precise designation of a Committee on Expenditure.

There may, indeed, be another motive (a fair Parliamentary motive, I am ready to allow) for moving an Amendment, and pressing it to a division. The Honourable Gentlemen may be desirous of ascertaining by a vote, the degree of confidence which the House of Commons may be pleased to repose in His Majesty's Ministers. If that be the object, I do not deprecate the division. Were it possible that the Honourable Gentlemen should succeed in getting the Government into their own hands, I confess I should not envy them the inheritance. But so long as the present Ministers remain in office, they will endeavour to do their duty to the Country. And that which I have most at heart, and which I venture humbly to implore of the House of Commons is, that whatever it may be their pleasure to decide as to the merits of individuals, or as to the fate of Administrations, they will be careful to preserve sacred and uninjured, the Constitution which is entrusted to their charge.

A FEW

CURSORY REMARKS

ON THE

OBNOXIOUS PARTS

OF THE

GAME LAWS.

SECOND EDITION.

BY

SIR WILLIAM ELFORD, BART. F.R. AND L.S.S.

1817.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The substance of the following pages was published between twenty and thirty years ago, previous to the discussion of the subject in Parliament. I am induced again to offer it to the public, in consequence of a bill being now before the House of Commons, which appears to have for its chief object, to legalize the sale of game by persons taking out licences for that purpose—a measure which, unless accompanied by making it property, will, in my humble opinion, tend to its destruction, by affording a safe and certain mode for the disposal of their depredations to poachers and night hunters, and thus rendering the licenced venders nothing less than authorised receivers of stolen goods.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The coincidence which appears between the following remarks, and the opinions which were advanced in the House of Commons, on Mr. Curwen's motion relative to the game laws, is such, that it is thought necessary to assure the public, that the contents of these pages were written and nearly ready for the press, before that debate took place.—The author trusts, that an inference of the justice of his sentiments, on the subject, may be drawn from thence, and a consequent weight attach to them, which they could not have derived from his own authority.

A FEW

CURSORY REMARKS,

&c. &c.

A CERTAIN part of the Game Laws of this kingdom have long been considered as a disgrace to its jurisprudence, and as, perhaps, the only glaring instance in which an equality of rights does not obtain among the various classes of the community. That in this part of our code, the greatest partiality in favor of the higher classes prevails, the slightest view of the subject will demonstrate; and all experience has shewn that the injustice of the system, is at least equalled by its inadequacy to the intended end. Game can never be preserved by an attempt to monopolize it. It has ever been found most plenty in those districts where a liberal conduct has been observed by great landholders to their dependants and neighbours; because there it becomes the interest, as well as the inclination of the farmers, to prevent an illicit destruction of it; whereas, in those places where a contrary conduct has prevailed, the farmers either extirpate it themselves, to prevent their grounds being trespassed on by sportsmen, or at least connive at its being destroyed by night hunters and other idle and dissolute persons.

How many of the old laws it may be requisite to repeal, and what new ones to enact, will soon probably undergo an

ample discussion; in the mean while, the following cursory observations are humbly offered to the consideration of the public; in which the chief object is to point out those parts of the game laws which appear most particularly oppressive, and the salutary consequences that will probably attend their abolition.

There are two descriptions of people on whom the present laws bear particularly hard; one of them comprises no less than the whole of that part of the community who are not qualified to kill game; amounting to much more than ninety-nine parts in an hundred of all the inhabitants; inasmuch as they have no *legal* means of possessing it, except as the gift of a qualified person; the consequence of which is, that they are constantly supplied by means which involve a scandalous and disgraceful breach of the laws; for scandalous and disgraceful it surely is to any country, that laws should continue in existence, the manifest injustice and inexpedience of which are such as render a regular connivance at the breach of them almost a matter of necessity. But these evils are light, compared with those sustained by the other description of persons above alluded to; against whom the oppressive restrictions seem particularly to have been directed, in all the acts of parliament made on the subject. I mean the lower class of landholders. Judge Blackstone describes a freeholder as "a freeman in the possession of the soil." In another place he says, "Land hath in its legal signification, an indefinite extent upwards as well as downwards; *cujus est solum, ejus est usque ad cœlum*, and downwards, whatever is in a direct line between the surface of any land, and the centre of the earth, belongs to the owner of the surface. So that the word *land* includes not only the face of the earth, but every thing under it or over it."

By this description it seems to be implied that the pos-

sessor of a freehold is considered as having the most ample and entire enjoyment of and dominion over his property. The same idea is inculcated by the general intention and spirit of the English laws, and it surely seems consonant to sound reason, good policy, and common justice, that he whom the law recognizes as possessing a property extending from the heaven to the centre of the earth, should be also entitled to take to his own use, those animals which are bred on the surface of it, and which subsist on the produce of his industry.

In the reign of Richard the Second, a person possessing a freehold of the clear annual income of forty shillings, was qualified to kill game. As the value of money decreased, the qualification was advanced to ten pounds a year; afterwards to forty pounds, and in the reign of Charles the Second, to one hundred pounds; since which time no alteration has been made. Persons, therefore, at present, possessing any freehold estate of less clear annual value than one hundred pounds, are not only debarred from taking the game on their own lands, but are subject to search-warrants, to fines, imprisonments, and corporal punishments, for having the means of doing so in their own houses. These restrictions on the inferior freeholders, are evidently emanations of the *feudal system*, and seem to be the only oppressive part of it which now remains. As this grievance then forms the most irksome and intolerable part of the game laws, so I am persuaded it constitutes the chief cause of their inefficacy, inasmuch as it makes it the interest of that class of people to assist and connive at the clandestine destruction of the game, in whom the chief power of preserving it necessarily resides.

If it can be proved that the very act which must do away the opprobrium that at present attaches to this part of the code will, at the same time, render the remainder of it in-

finitely more efficacious; it will be granted, that to this point our attention ought to be directed, and the remedy to be applied.

Among the various regulations which have been suggested for the correction of the defective part of the game laws, that of making game property, seems to have met with the greatest number of advocates. And although many objections have been started as to the practicability of making that property, which, being *feræ naturæ*, must necessarily be unconfined, and consequently fluctuating in its appropriation; there seems to be no solid grounds to believe, that under all difficulties, such a temporary appropriation of, or property in it, may not be established, as will be sufficient for all the purposes intended by the measure. It appears as if the following definition might be adopted: "*Game is the property of the owner of the soil on which it may be found resting, between the rising and setting of the sun.*" Certain regulations and modifications of this principle, will, however, be necessary to prevent interruption to sportsmen, in the pursuit of their game; and perhaps, the pre-existing customs in that respect, will be amply sufficient; if not, such other rules may be laid down, as will obviate the difficulty, for it certainly is not on this part of the subject that much difficulty will occur. Hunters, for instance, should have no power to search for their object on any man's property, without his leave, but should have liberty to pursue it over every man's, being amenable for any injury which might ensue.

Whether shooters might be permitted to follow and recover game, wherever it might be driven, would be a question of some nicety. All persons of landed property would be equally affected by the permission or the restraint, in exact proportion to the respective areas of their estates; for it will, I believe, be found on consideration, that the small

and the great landholder, would derive an exactly proportional benefit from either regulation. But although the benefits to be derived to landholders, would, in either case, be nearly balanced, and proportionate to their respective properties, yet the power of pursuit would open a door to great imposition and litigation. Those who were really searching for game, on the property of others, might pretend they were only pursuing what had been driven thither, and the fact could not be easily ascertained; the pursuit of game by shooters, therefore should, perhaps, be prohibited, as the surest and most effectual means to prevent contests.*

This property in game, if adopted as to proprietors of land, ought, on the same principle of justice, to be extended to the possessor, in his own right, of estates, held under long leases, and perhaps to copyholds of inheritance: for such tenures, as far as game is concerned, ought to be considered in every respect like a fee-simple. In leases for terms of 99 years absolute, or determinable on lives, the purchaser should not necessarily be entitled to the game. In this there is no hardship or oppression. Every possessor of property has an undoubted right to sell and to retain such parts of it, as shall be mutually agreed on between the purchaser and himself. He has as much right to reserve to himself the game, as the trees, the mines, and quarries. It is a compact between two people for their mutual benefit. If the purchaser is a sportsman, the proprietor will get so much less for the interest he sells, as the reservation may be estimated at by him who buys; considered as objects both of profit and amusement; if he is not a sportsman, the profit only will come into consideration; but in either case, the seller will be paid only for what he alienates, and not

* The practice of pursuing game, in any case, has since been decided to be unlawful.

for what he reserves. Every one knows, that in those districts where pheasants and partridges are cautiously preserved, less rent can be obtained for the farms, on account of the depredations of those animals; but that point having been previously settled, it is certainly no injustice to the tenants, that part of the produce is devoured by the game. Such would be the effect of a reservation of the game, on estates leased for terms of years.

It is to be remarked, that in the event of making game property, the idea of a *qualification* to kill it, would be necessarily done away. At present, persons possessing an estate in land, of the annual value of one hundred pounds, or in lease, of the annual value of one hundred and fifty pounds, are *qualified* to kill game; that is, they may do so on their own estates, without being subject to the penalties of those acts of parliament which relate particularly to that point. But after the appropriation of game, every proprietor of lands will be impowered to kill it on that land, during the day-time, and to delegate the power of doing so to others.

Should such a regulation as that above suggested take place, men of large property would have at least as much power, and as great a source of amusement, as they have at present; the giving a right which nature and justice cry aloud for, to small freeholders, would afford no pretence for invading *their* large demains. The great and the small landholder would be equally protected and supported by the law, in all their just right and privileges; in all that naturally and justly appertains to their respective possessions. Every great landholder who resides in the country, must have felt the almost unlimited influence he may acquire over the small freeholders his neighbours, by the observance of even a slight degree of good conduct and kindness to them. Those, who under the present unjust restrictions,

will assist in preserving the game for an obliging and kind neighbouring gentleman, will do so with ten times the alacrity, when they feel themselves possessed of the power of the alternative; when the right to withhold gives them the full power to oblige, and communicates the grace of a free gift to that which is at present little better than a necessary compliance.

It is a well known fact, although particular instances cannot easily be adduced, that freeholders of small property, frequently destroy the nests of pheasants and partridges. He, who from year to year, sees animals bred on his soil, and feeding on the fruits of his labour, which the law will not permit him to use, may palliate the offence of destroying it prematurely and illegally, by urging the hardship of seeing his fences broken, and his crops trodden down by overbearing neighbours or wandering strangers. These motives to the violation of the law, must be allowed to be very powerful, and such as must plead strongly in favour of the offender. But making game property, will cure only part of the evil, if it is not followed by legalising the sale of it. By this regulation another breach of the laws, much more prevalent and much more extensive, will be done away, by giving a sanction to that, which all experience proves it is impossible to avert, and which all reason and argument evince, ought not to be prevented. It has been before observed, that a vast majority of the community have no legal means of possessing game, but as the gift of a qualified person, and of course, that a very small number of that majority can lawfully acquire it. That this restriction is an unreasonable one, may fairly be inferred, from the universal practice of selling it clandestinely in every part of the kingdom; from the very small number of persons convicted of so doing, although the transaction is scarcely ever so private, as not to be easily detected;

and from the general sense of the people, to acquiesce in, and connive at, the practice, in favor of the inhabitants of towns; most of whom must otherwise be deprived of this part of the produce of the earth. Surely that law is an unreasonable one, and ought to be abolished, which is almost universally permitted to be violated with impunity. Such a tacit acknowledgment of its injustice, ought instantly to be followed by its repeal.

The only innovation which will attend these acts of justice and policy, will be, that small freeholders will do that openly, which they have hitherto practised clandestinely, by being permitted to kill their own game, and that the sale of it will be publicly professed, instead of being privately endured. The rights of lords of manors are not necessarily invaded—the pleasures of sporting will not be infringed—the rules and customs for the pursuit of game will remain the same. In short, every man will have a right, in the first instance to sport on his own property, or to give any other person leave to do so; and no man will have a right to go on the land of another, without his permission.

The simplicity of the proposed remedy, therefore, ought to operate in favor of its adoption, and I cannot allow myself to doubt for a moment, that the preservation of the game will, by a kind of collateral operation, be an inevitable consequence of it, because all those other game laws which have hitherto been considered as too severe, will, when game is made property, no longer be viewed in that light. As soon as the monopoly has ceased, the laws for the general preservation of it will be inforced and obeyed with alacrity, because it will be the general interest of the community to promote their execution. Restrictions against killing game in the night, by persons of every description, ought to be particularly inforced, for as many sorts of game, which are in a quiescent state by day, are found wandering

very widely in the night season, those who should kill it even on their own lands, at such a time, would take a larger portion than belonged to them. The laws against poachers should be most strictly administered. Killing game by night is generally practised by the worst part of the community; and it seldom happens, that this is the only crime committed by them. If they do not succeed in the first object of their pursuit, depredations on the farm-yards obviously present themselves, as a good substitute, and it may safely be asserted, that no small number of those who end their lives on the gallows, began their career by the above-mentioned practice.

The restrictions as to the periods of the year when game may be killed, ought also to be continued in full force, and perhaps it would be beneficial, that they should be extended still further. It has been urged in opposition to this, that if game was made property, and permitted to be sold, the extending the restrictions would only give more time for the illicit destruction of it, to the great disappointment of the fair and honest sportsman; for that even now, partridges, &c. are brought into the markets long before the day allowed for killing them. To this it may be answered, as has been done before, that the cases are not similar; that at present, the purchase of game is altogether illegal, and neither the seller nor buyer take much account of the time when the act is committed; but when to expose game to sale, at certain times of the year, is permitted by law, all persons will cheerfully submit to those rules, which are intended for its general preservation; because all persons are interested in their observance. If any one should now be hardy enough to enter the market in a populous town, for the avowed purpose of bringing any of the numerous venders of game to justice even at those parts of the season when it is illegal, the inhabitants would look with an evil

eye on him, who should thus attempt to deprive them of a luxury they had been long accustomed to; but the moment the monopoly is done away, the moment it becomes obvious, that the general preservation of the game is the object of the law, those very inhabitants would rather assist than oppose the bringing the offenders to justice.

One inconvenience would certainly arise from the adoption of this plan, which is, the absolute necessity for repealing the licence revenue Act, and therefore some other object of taxation must be substituted to make up the deficiency; for giving a small freeholder leave to kill his game, and obliging him previously to take out a licence at the expense of three guineas, would be a mockery, and insult. What remedy may be found for this inconvenience, need not be discussed here, but as it would be an inevitable one, it must some how or other be guarded against.[1] Perhaps a general tax on dogs would be fully adequate to the deficiency arising from the abolition of the licence act, and as it would in a certain degree apply to the same object, would be possibly as good a substitute as could be adopted. A small farmer who could not pay three guineas for a licence, might cheerfully pay five shillings as a tax on his dog; and as the number of people keeping dogs are incalculably greater than those who now take out licences, a small tax on them would afford an ample compensation.

I have offered these few hints to the public, from a conviction, which some years' observation and deliberation on the subject, have strongly impressed on my mind, that the two regulations above recommended would produce all those beneficial effects which have before been adverted to; and that a greater plenty of the game would be an infallible consequence of them. But I still contend that as this is

[1] This was written before Dogs were taxed.

the only obvious and striking instance in which an equality of rights does not obtain, whatever may be the consequence respecting the game, an abrogation of these restrictions on the small landholders ought to take place. There is no mode of averting unfounded complaints so effectual as abolishing real grievances. Not only justice, therefore, but good policy demands it. The small landholders are dispersed over the whole surface of the country,—the influence of their example must necessarily be considerable—in their general demeanour, when discontent has been most prevalent they have shewn themselves warmly attached to the laws of their country, and on various occasions when others have resisted those laws, have associated in a zealous and constitutional support of them.

A

TEMPERATE DISCUSSION

OF

THE CAUSES

WHICH HAVE LED TO

THE PRESENT HIGH PRICE

OF

BREAD.

ADDRESSED TO

THE PLAIN SENSE OF THE PEOPLE.

BY THE RIGHT HON. CHARLES LONG, M. P.

MEN. I tell you, friends, most charitable care
Have the patricians of you.
CIT. Care for us! What, suffer us to perish with their store-houses
cram'd with grain?—
MEN. Either you must
Confess yourselves wondrous malicious,
Or be accus'd of folly. CORIOLANUS.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

1817.

A

TEMPERATE DISCUSSION,

&c. &c.

THERE is no man who has the welfare of his country at heart, and who has reflected upon the distresses which the high price of provisions must occasion among a numerous class of the people, who does not feel most sincerely anxious to alleviate their misfortunes during the present year, and to find, if possible, the means of averting so great a calamity for the future.

The first step towards attaining so desirable an object, is to trace, as accurately as we are able, the causes from whence this calamity springs. The prejudice of one man, and the superficial inquiry of another, lead them to ascribe it to some one operative principle; which, together with a variety of other circumstances, have combined to produce the effect.—Some positively deny that there is any real deficiency, and erroneously, and perhaps wickedly, impute the high price solely to combination and monopoly. Error (for some, at least, we suppose to be only mistaken) never appeared in a more dangerous light than in the propagation of this opinion. If it is persisted in, and acted upon, instead of adding to our supplies, it will, in its consequences, destroy those already in our possession; it will aggravate the evil it affects to cure, and will convert scarcity into real famine.

That there was a deficiency in the wheat crop of last year (however confidently denied at the time) is now no longer matter of opinion. The importation of near 1,100,000 quarters (probably full one sixth of the consumption), the sparing use of the article during the year, and the small stock on hand at the period of the late harvest, render that fact indisputable.

The reasoning contained in these Observations will, in part, apply to provisions in general, though the particular remarks will relate to wheaten bread; that being the article most essential to the food of the people, and governing, in a great degree, the price of other commodities: and I think I can state shortly, enough to convince any fair and candid man, that some increase in the average price of this article, beyond that of former times, is to be accounted for by the usual quantity produced not being equal to the general demand; and that the present high price is to be traced either to the deficiency in the present crop, or to the old crop being exhausted before the present harvest could be brought into use; though I am very far from contending that collateral circumstances, which I shall notice, have not contributed still further to advance the price.

The importation and exportation accounts of the Custom-house clearly demonstrate that the annual average produce of wheat, in this country, is not sufficient for the ordinary annual demand: whether this demand, which has been lately very rapidly increasing, is occasioned by increased population, or by a more general use of this article among classes of persons who formerly consumed it sparingly, or whether, as is most probably the case, from both these causes united, is not material to the present point;—the demand having been almost progressively increasing in a greater proportion than the produce, is sufficient to account for a high price; the amount to which that price, in any one year, may arise, as far as this cause operates, will depend upon the degree in which the general deficiency is supplied by foreign importation, and upon the degree to which the consumption of the article is diminished.

It appears from Smith's Corn Tables,[1] that, from the year 1697 to 1765, the whole quantity of wheat *exported* exceeded the quantity *imported* by 14,048,994 quarters; and that during the last nineteen years of that period, from the year 1746 to 1765, the quantity *exported* exceeded the quantity *imported* by 6,649,609 quarters; or, on an average, by about 350,000 quarters, amounting, at 32s. per quarter, to about 560,000*l.* per annum: and the whole import of grain produced, in the same period, on an average, 651,000*l.* per annum.—Soon after the year 1765 we began to lose our exportation trade; and from 1771 to 1791, the *import* of wheat *exceeded* the export by 798,917 quarters,[2] and the sum paid for grain imported during this period was 5,901,969*l.* or at the rate of 295,000*l.* per annum.—From the beginning of the year 1791 to the 10th of October in the present year, a period of less than half

[1] Vide Tracts on Corn Trade, p. 130 and 136.
[2] Vide Custom-house Accounts.

the time, the import of wheat has exceeded the export, by 3,894,594 quarters.'

Whatever, therefore, may have been the extension of our corn land during the above period, it has not kept pace with the increasing demand for wheat; and when it is seen that we are dependant upon the surplus produce of other nations to supply so great a deficiency, it is not too much to presume, that that deficiency in unfavorable years will not be readily supplied by importation; and that a scarcity, in a greater or less degree, must be the consequence.

Hitherto I am speaking of the ordinary deficiency arising from the ordinary produce; to which, this year, as well as the last, is added the misfortune of a produce below the average, in what precise degree I will not take upon myself to affirm. On such a point, an opinion founded upon the experience of any one man is quite inconclusive; it is upon collective opinion only, and upon very general inquiry, that a fair judgment of the actual deficiency can be formed. Such an inquiry has been very diligently prosecuted; and by those returns which I have seen, it appears that the crop has been most unusually uneven; that there is a great produce in some districts, and a considerable failure in others;—and this circumstance accounts for the great difference of opinions among persons who speak of the whole, from the partial information of their own neighbourhood. But, from comparing the different accounts which it is possible for an individual to procure,

	Imported.		Exported. British.		Exported. Foreign.		Total Export.	
1791	430,798	1	31,008	2	17,265	7	48,274	1
1792	20,201	2	224,190	4	26,791	5	250,982	1
1793	429,350	4	2,239	2	32,626	1	44,865	3
1794	324,637	2	24,640	4	91,632	0	116,272	4
1795	287,930	3	—	-	677	0	677	0
1796	820,381	4	92	6	584	3	677	1
1797	456,903	5	7,921	7	15,153	7	23,075	6
1798	395,407	5	775	0	21,363	0	22,138	0
1799	445,047	5	10,103	6	6,855	7	16,959	5
Three Quarters, ending the 10th October 1800	817,859	7	* London, about				10,000	
							533,919	
	4,428,513							
Deduct, exported	533,919							
	3,894,594							

* In the above account, the exports cannot be rendered to a later time, for the year 1800, than the 5th July, from the out-ports, up to which time none had been exported.

there seems sufficient reason to conclude, that "the crop of wheat throughout the kingdom is short of the average produce."

If we fairly consider the subject, can we wonder that this should be the nature of the information which has been obtained? The weather, in the months of June and July, was so remarkably fine, that every body immediately cried out that the harvest must be abundant. People forgot that the seed-time, the most important season for the farmer, had been particularly unfavorable; and that it had produced in many places an evil which no subsequent fine weather could remedy, that of preventing him from sowing the same quantity of land which he would have done in a more favourable season. It must also be observed, that though the fine weather enabled some of the farmers in the southern parts of the country to get in their harvest much earlier than usual, in the northern parts the wheat was too backward to permit the farmer to take advantage of the same season; and even in many parts of the country where the harvest was the earliest, it has been found that the very warm weather setting in so soon in the year, had the effect of ripening the corn before it had reached its full growth; that much of it does not yield well in threshing; and that the farmer, with his early and well-housed harvest, has only reaped a diminished crop.

At the present moment, however, other circumstances concur to contribute to the high price of wheat, and may naturally have raised it much higher, for a time, than the state of the crop alone would justify. This is unfortunately a second year of scarcity; the old stock was nearly exhausted at the period of the harvest of the present year. During the last six or seven weeks, therefore, the double demand both for consumption and for seed corn, has been to be supplied out of the new harvest: the quantity of seed corn, in general, is estimated at not less than six or seven weeks consumption. The seed-time this year has been as favourable as that of the last was unpropitious, a circumstance in itself very satisfactory, but which has necessarily produced a more than usual demand for seed; the high price at the same time has naturally induced the farmer to sow a greater quantity of wheat, and the failure of the turnip crops in some parts, has left more land than usual in a state to receive it, while the circumstance of the season, and the peculiar fineness of the weather, have given so much employment out of doors, as to interfere, in some degree, with threshing the greatest possible quantity of corn. These circumstances are sufficient to account for the excessive dearness of the present moment, even on the supposition of the harvest having been abundant; and they afford us reasonable ground to expect that the present very high price will not be of long duration, and

particularly if we take such measures as are within our reach to provide for the wants of the latter part of the year.

The same considerations are sufficient to account for the high price of provisions, without imputing it to the tricks and practices of monopolists. Such persons do not start up in a day; and what were they doing in the years 1797 and 1798, and the first part of 1799, when wheat was at about fifty shillings per quarter? Too much sanction has been given to the clamour raised against them; and their influence in enhancing the price of the markets has been most dangerously exaggerated. By a monopolist, whether he comes under the legal definition of engrosser, forestaller, or regrater, I mean "a person who employs his capital in the purchase of an article for the purpose of selling it again at an exorbitant price, which he contrives artificially to raise, and which bears no just relation to the plenty or scarcity of such article." To say that such men do not exist, might not be so dangerous, but would be as absurd as to join the cry we have lately heard—that they dwell in every street, and infest every market. In the trade of corn, the dealers are too numerous to allow the schemes of such men to be successful; if they attempt them, nine times out of ten they must be losers by the competition of the fair trader.

Does any man suppose that most of the Judges did not set out upon their late circuit with sufficient abhorrence of this crime, and with quite sufficient disposition to punish it wherever it was detected? It was the subject of frequent charges to grand juries, pointing it out as the crime most common, and therefore most peculiarly calling for their attention; and county subscriptions were entered into for the prosecution of the supposed numerous offenders. How many convictions did these measures produce? I know only of two of any consequence; and yet I think no man who has studied the common law upon the subject will be of opinion that the legal description of this offence is confined within too narrow limits, or that the law does not afford a sufficient facility of detection. One of these convictions related to the resale of oats, and came within the legal definition of *regrating*. Without entering into the merits of this particular case, it is not too much to say, that cases of regrating and forestalling also, may easily be put (though it is not said that they are likely frequently to happen) where they are even beneficial to the community: where no artificial or exorbitant price is raised, and where, therefore, that fraudulent intent is wanting, which is the essence of this crime. I am as hostile as any man to the real monopolist, and particularly to the person who is wicked enough to create an exorbitant and artificial price in the articles of human sustenance; but the more such characters are reprehensible, the more desirous we should be to prove that such characters can-

not be common, the more anxious we should be that just men, acting in the fair line of their business, should not be confounded with them.

It is certainly not intended to cast the slightest reflection upon the conduct of those who so honourably for themselves, and so beneficially for the nation, administer the laws of this country. To say of any one of them, that in the distribution of justice he acts from the purest and most disinterested motives, would only be unfit, because it might, by possibility, be supposed to imply that this description did not equally, or at least so eminently, apply to all; but the best men may have prejudices, and prejudice is likely to make dangerous inroads into the province of reason, when it is assisted by the influence of an upright character, by the zeal of a warm temper, and by the powers of an active mind.

But if monopoly has not materially contributed to aggravate the evil we endure, have the speculations of the farmer, the corn-dealer, or the miller, tended to this point, and have they been prejudicial to the public? or is the capital of any one of these descriptions of persons, as it has been represented, unnecessarily, and therefore injuriously, employed in the corn-trade?

It seems to have been the opinion of the best authors on the subject, that the employment of capital in any branch of trade operated in all cases beneficially for the community; that it ensured a regular supply for the market, and offered the article in which it was employed at a cheaper rate to the consumer. As a general rule, this is unquestionably true; the exception to the rule is that to which I have before alluded, an exception, however, which can scarcely apply in any degree to a trade of such competition as that of which I am speaking.

If the farmer were obliged to sell all the corn he brought to market to the consumer, and the consumer could only purchase of the farmer, what would be the consequence? In an overstocked market the farmer must be ruined, and in an ill-supplied market the consumer must starve. Hence arises the necessity of the employment of the capital of the *middle man*, who, by affording the farmer a certain sale, enables him to sell cheaper; and who, because he purchases more than he consumes, has the means of furnishing the market with whatever the demand may require. No large city could be adequately supplied without the intervention of these men, who have lately been represented as interfering without necessity, and have been treated by a misguided mob as objects of public odium and detestation.

It is true that when an article becomes scarce, particularly one of constant demand, the price of such article is not only raised by the scarcity, but is generally increased also in some degree by the

speculation which is founded upon such scarcity. Farmers and other dealers in corn have been said to have kept that article in store lately more than in ordinary times, and so to have held up the price. But are we sure this is an evil? Is not, in the time of scarcity, the interest of the dealer in corn and that of the public, in a great degree, at least, the same? If he brought his corn to market, as in a plentiful year, the whole corn of the country would be consumed in the first few months: a scanty crop should be spread sparingly over every part of the year, and it is the high price that saves any of it to the end. As to the idea of a combination of farmers to hoard their corn, it is chimerical; they do not communicate enough with each other to combine; and if they did communicate, their numbers and their different circumstances would preclude the possibility of such a practice: they were never supposed to have hoarded more upon speculation than in the last twelve months, and yet the old stock of corn was never so nearly exhausted on the appearance of the new crop as in the present season.

The miller also has been supposed, in these times of scarcity, to have made enormous profits: like that of all other trades, his profit is the largest when the article in which he deals is dearest. In times of abundance there is a competition of sellers, all looking for a living profit; in times of scarcity there is a competition of hoarders, all looking for a rising price. But this has its limits. If a dealer hoards too long, he is a loser, and has only enabled his competitors to get the high price. This is the nature of all trades of speculation, and such is, necessarily, in a great degree, the trade of the miller. Those who think they prove the enormity of his profits by telling us that the price of flour was on a particular day, or on several days, if you please, much higher than it ought to have been, compared with the price of wheat, argue as if they thought the wheat that was bought one day was ground the next; instead of which, the miller must act in some degree as the *middle man*; the wheat he grinds to-day, he purchased, perhaps, one or two months ago; and therefore, though the price of flour may, in some measure, be regulated by the price of wheat, it cannot be entirely governed by it. If it is said that the miller ought not to be a speculator; that he should be prohibited from becoming a purchaser; and that he should be paid at a certain rate for grinding:—the answer is, that it is impossible to fix the rate; that which would be an enormous profit to one man, would drive another, with inferior machinery and under different circumstances, totally out of the trade.

But even admitting that something has been added to the price of corn beyond that which the scarcity alone would have warranted,

by the speculations of these men, how is it to be remedied? how is their trade to be distinguished from all others, its profits limited, and its traders restrained in the use of their capital? how, I say, is this to be done without injuring the public, whom it is meant to benefit? Whether a man deals in sugar, or in cotton, in cloth, or in corn, the principle is the same; his object is gain, and he risks his money because he is allowed to sell the article in his possession when he pleases, and at the best price he can obtain for it: deprive him of these advantages, and you drive his capital out of the trade; and when that is accomplished in the corn trade, does any man suppose the public will buy their corn at a cheaper rate? The spirit of adventure is the life of trade; it supposes a prospect of gain, but it implies also a hazard of loss. The wants of the nation are supplied by a thousand different commercial speculations; upon some there is a great gain, on others a loss; but upon the whole, by the combined effects of this competition of adventure, the supply is obtained by the public upon more moderate terms than by any other mode. Take away the prospect, even of great gain, and you take away the spur and incitement to adventure. If you can prove that a merchant, upon a single enterprise has made an enormous profit, do you prove that the public or that any individual has been defrauded? that he is an unjust man, a bad member of the community? No! you prove only that he is a successful adventurer; and why should not the same rule apply to the trade in corn, which is applicable to that of every other article? If, indeed, the dealer in corn, for the purpose of obtaining his profit, spreads a false alarm, or raises by combination, or by any other undue means, an excessive price for the commodity in which he deals, from that moment he deserts the course of just and honourable trade, from that moment his conduct becomes criminal? but while he confines himself to fair speculation, he necessarily benefits the public interest, while his sole view is that of promoting his own.

It is impossible, however, to consider the state of this country without perceiving other causes which operate to raise the price of every article, and particularly of those of constant demand. The wealth of the nation itself, and the number of rich competitors in the market, must necessarily produce this effect. But is this an argument against a nation enriching itself by the industry of its inhabitants? Are we at this day to cry out against the employment of the merchant's capital? and if we are, to what degree shall he be restrained in the use of it, or to what period of our commercial history shall we return? And who, I ask, will be the man to propose a measure that shall set limits to the increasing wealth and prosperity of the nation, as derived from our successful and extensive commerce? An outcry has been raised against what is gene-

rally, though perhaps often inaccurately, termed fictitious capital, about as wise and as well founded as the clamour we have heard against monopolists; it is in fact a remonstrance against the use of the credit of the English merchant and the English banker. I do not say that the use of fictitious capital was never pushed too far; that it never in any instance did harm: What human institution is totally free from abuse? But I contend that it has done great good; that a great part of the substantial wealth of this nation has been obtained by the credit of the British trader, enabling him to add fictitious capital to real capital; and to make profits, the result of the employment of both. But if it tends to enhance the price of provisions, does it not do mischief? Not if the price of every other thing is suffered to bear its due and relative proportion. If, for instance, the wages of labor do not, in general, enable the labourer to maintain himself as he did formerly, his wages ought to be raised; it is a decided proof that the rise of wages has not kept pace with the average increase of the price of those articles which are necessary to his support, or, in other words, that his wages have not been raised as the value of money has been depreciated; but raise his wages to that level, the nominal value of money is of no consequence to him; his condition, except in years of extraordinary scarcity, produced by the seasons, remains the same; he considers the possession of a shilling now, as he did that of sixpence thirty or forty years ago, because he earns it with the same ease, and because it procures him the same necessaries of life.

And here I cannot help calling upon the gentry of the country to consider fairly whether the wages of agricultural labor have kept the proportion I have described. The wages of the manufacturer and the artisan have been progressively rising, perhaps, in as great a degree as the value of money has decreased; it is natural it should be so in a nation which has turned its attention so much to the improvement and extension of its commerce. But we see strong reason now to induce us to encourage the agriculture of the country as well as its commerce; and the wages of the husbandman do not appear to have been raised altogether in a just proportion, consistently with the principles I have stated. It is difficult to frame any law upon this subject. Against such a law it might be contended, that if a *minimum* of the price of labor were fixed, it could only apply to able-bodied men; that it would have the effect of throwing out of work every labourer who was not in the vigour of life and of health; and that it would only tend to increase the poor rate. These, and perhaps other arguments against the enactment of any positive law upon the subject, may be unanswerable; but if I am correct in my opinion, I trust the good sense of the country gentlemen and farmers will render any such law unnecessary; and that they will unite throughout the kingdom to render the lot of the

peasant of Great Britain, as it always hitherto has been, the happiest in Europe. I do not say they should raise the price of wages according to the present high price of wheat—certainly not; a temporary difficulty may be met by a temporary remedy; but they should be fixed according to the ordinary price of wheat, or of that grain which is the common sustenance of the labourer in the district. Whatever is the state of the crop of wheat, the labourer surely is entitled to his proportion of the supply; if his wages are thus settled, that proportion will be less, as it ought to be, in a season of extraordinary scarcity and high price, than in one of abundance: the difference on such an emergency should be made up to him, by the gratuity of his employer, in any other article of food, by the bounty and voluntary contribution of individuals, of which we have seen such general proofs, and by the judicious application of parochial relief, adapted to such peculiar circumstances. I personally know many of those to whom I am now particularly addressing myself, and I mistake them much, if they are not as ready to hear and to remove every just complaint, as they are to lend their useful assistance to silence every unfounded clamour, and to suppress every tumultuous proceeding throughout the country.

The wealth of the nation, and the consequent depreciation in the value of money, we are constantly told by those who I really believe contemplate that wealth with unaffected grief, produce many other prejudicial effects besides that which has been noticed: but these supposed misfortunes do not immediately relate to the point on which I am speaking, and I shall therefore scarcely notice them. Emigration, it is said, will be encouraged by it; people will be disposed to go to a country where they can live cheaper. I confess I never hear a person hinting at the advantages of emigration without being malicious enough to wish he would put his schemes into execution. I am very much inclined to be of opinion, that a person does very little good in this country who is disposed to think every other better; perhaps it would not be difficult to show that increased wealth is more likely to encourage population than emigration; at all events, emigration has not done us much mischief yet: it is to increased population, with all its advantages, that we owe no inconsiderable portion of the evil of which I am speaking.

In all times those who have opposed a war, have imputed to it every calamity which has taken place during its continuance; of course it is said to be the great and leading cause of the evil we now endure, arising from the present high price of provisions. But how it produces this effect exactly, those who make the assertion never condescend to tell us. I suppose they would readily admit, that as the war continues its influence increases. How,

then, does it happen, that in the course of the years 1795 and 1796, when the war could not have had any great effect, the price of wheat was excessively high; and in the years 1797 and 1798, when that influence, we should suppose, would have considerably increased, it was, perhaps, even lower than those who wish to encourage its growth could desire? But let those who maintain this opinion look at the price of wheat in every year from the beginning of the century to the present time. If that opinion were correct, a number of years of war must be clearly and evidently marked by a rise in the price, much more considerable than that which took place in the same number of years of peace. The influence of war would not only be general, but it would particularly affect the price in the years of its continuance. What is the fact? In the rise which took place in the course of the time of which I am speaking, the operation of war is scarcely, if at all, perceptible: and it was soon after the year 1765, and during a period of profound peace, when we lost our exportation trade, and when that necessity of importation first began, which has since risen to so alarming a height. During the short period of peace, after the treaty of *Ryswick*, the average price of wheat was 2l. 17s. 5d. per quarter; in the subsequent war of 1701, it was 2l. 4s. 4d.; in the war which commenced in 1739, the average price was 1l. 15s. 5d.; in the nine years previous to the war, it was 1l. 15s. 9d.; in the seven years war, including a year of an extraordinary deficiency of crop (1757), the average price was 2l. 2s. 4d.; in the preceding seven years it was 1l. 18s. 10d.; in the American war the average price was 2l. 3s. 2d. and in the preceding nine years 2l. 5s. 9d. From the termination of the American war to the commencement of the present war, the average price was 2l. 6s. 7d. Can any thing show more clearly than this statement, that it is to the years of scarcity of 1795, 1796, 1799, and 1800, during the present war, and not to the influence of the war itself, that the average price during the war has risen to 3l. 9s.? if it were otherwise, why did not former wars affect the price as well as the present? If it is said that in time of war a certain number of persons consume more as soldiers and sailors, than they would in other employments in time of peace, the amount of that trifling excess, as far as it goes, is fairly to be placed to the account; but it must be recollected also, that many of these persons are fed by supplies bought abroad, and

		l.	*s.*	*d.*	*Average.* *l.*	*s.*	*d.*
Peace.	1698 —	3	8	4	2	17	5
	1699 —	3	4	0			
	1700 —	2	0	0			

which, if the war did not exist, would not be obtained. Our navy upon distant stations is chiefly supplied by purchases made upon the spot; and the whole quantity of wheat purchased in England by the Commissioners of Victualling, from the beginning of this year to the present period, does not amount to one fourteenth part of the quantity which has been imported within the same time. If it is meant that the war, in transferring to this country

			l.	*s.*	*d.*	*Average.*
War.	1701	—	1	17	8	
	1702	—	1	9	6	
	1703	—	1	16	0	
	1704	—	2	6	6	
	1705	—	1	10	0	
	1706	—	1	6	0	2 4 4
	1707	—	1	8	6	
	1708	—	2	1	6	
	1709	—	3	18	6	
	1710	—	3	18	0	
	1711	—	2	14	0	
	1712	—	2	6	4	
Peace.	1731	—	1	12	10	
	1732	—	1	6	8	
	1733	—	1	8	4	
	1734	—	1	18	10	
	1735	—	2	3	0	1 15 9
	1736	—	2	0	4	
	1737	—	1	18	0	
	1738	—	1	15	6	
	1739	—	1	18	6	
War.	1740	—	2	10	8	
	1741	—	2	6	8	
	1742	—	1	14	0	
	1743	—	1	4	10	
	1744	—	1	4	10	1 15 5
	1745	—	1	7	6	
	1746	—	1	19	0	
	1747	—	1	14	10	
	1748	—	1	17	9	
Peace.	1750	—	1	12	6	
	1751	—	1	18	6	
	1752	—	2	1	10	
	1753	—	2	4	8	1 18 8
	1754	—	1	14	8	
	1755	—	1	13	10	
	1756	—	2	5	3	
War.	1757	—	3	0	0	
	1758	—	2	10	0	
	1759	—	1	19	10	
	1760	—	1	16	6	2 2 4
	1761	—	1	10	3	
	1762	—	1	19	0	
	1763	—	2	0	0	

so great a part of the commerce of the world, has transferred with it great additional wealth, and that this has produced high price —I have already admitted the weight of this consideration. I wish to know how the war is supposed to operate, that we may fairly appreciate its amount.—All I know at present is, what may be collected from general, and sometimes warm and vehement, assertion, that *Mr. Fox*,[1] in performing his annual duty, as representative for Westminster, at the Shakespeare Tavern, positively asserted, "that the war was the principal cause of the present high

			l.	*s.*	*d.*	*Average.*		
Peace.	1766	—	1	18	3			
	1767	—	2	10	11			
	1768	—	2	7	10			
	1769	—	1	16	1			
	1770	—	1	18	8	2	5	9
	1771	—	2	7	2			
	1772	—	2	10	8			
	1773	—	2	11	0			
	1774	—	2	12	8			
War.	1775	—	2	8	4			
	1776	—	1	18	2			
	1777	—	2	5	6			
	1778	—	2	2	0			
	1779	—	1	13	8	2	3	2
	1780	—	1	15	8			
	1781	—	2	4	8			
	1782	—	2	7	10			
	1783	—	2	12	8			
Peace.	1784	—	2	8	10			
	1785	—	2	1	10			
	1786	—	1	18	10			
	1787	—	2	1	2			
	1788	—	2	15	0	2	6	7
	1789	—	2	11	2			
	1790	—	2	13	2			
	1791	—	2	7	0			
	1792	—	2	2	4			
	1793	—	2	8	4			
War.	1794	—	2	11	4			
	1795	—	3	14	5			
	1796	—	3	17	3			
	1797	—	2	12	9	3	9	0
	1798	—	2	9	7			
	1799	—	3	6	10			
	1800	—	5	11	4			

The prices from 1698 to 1765 are taken from Smith's Corn Tracts; from 1765 to 1770, from the Audit books of Eton College, as the price of the Windsor market; and from 1770 to the present time, from the Corn Register established by act of the 10th of the King—and are the average prices of England.

[1] Vide Morning Chronicle, October 11th, 1800.

price of provisions:" and that, at the meeting of the freeholders of the county of *Middlesex*, it was resolved, not upon proof, or the attempt of proof, but upon the assertion of one gentleman, "that the principal cause of the present distress was the war; and that their representatives be instructed to vote against its continuance on every opportunity."

If the taxes particularly, which have been imposed during the present war, are represented to have produced the high price of provisions, it seems natural to suppose that taxes would have had the same effect in former wars; and it has been shown, by the account of the price of wheat which has been referred to, that they had not that effect.

It may be also observed, that the duty upon the amount of the assessed taxes, now replaced by the income duty, the most considerable tax which has taken place during the war, was imposed in the beginning of the year 1798; if, therefore, this tax had any great effect in raising the price of bread, it would have been felt distinctly in that year, whereas bread and almost all other provisions have never been so cheap during the war as in that particular year; but to prove that the taxes of the war produce the present high price of grain, some proportion should be shown to be kept between the amount of those taxes and the increase in the price of the articles the farmer produces; because it must be contended that he increases the price of such articles to enable him to pay his taxes; but the complaint we have constantly heard has been, that the farmer has felt the taxes of the war less than any other person; how then can it appear that they have operated to increase the price of the article in which he deals in a greater degree than that of any other commodity? and is it not evident, that it is some other cause to which that high price is fairly to be ascribed?

What then I contend for is, that the high price of wheat and of bread is not the effect of monopoly and combination—is not the effect of the speculations of the farmer, the corn-dealer, or the miller—is not the consequence of the war. All these things have their weight in the scale, but it is not great or preponderating. It is the effect of an ordinary consumption considerably exceeding our ordinary produce, and of a produce, in the last and in the present years, much below the average; the price is still further augmented by the increased wealth of the nation, and the consequent depreciation in the value of money. The remedies for this evil of high price are not to inflame the mob against monopolists—to restrain the freedom of the trade in corn, or to fetter and check the commerce of the nation. The obvious remedies are, the more limited use of wheat, and a further encouragement to the importation of it, and the extension of our corn land, by the re-

moval of every impediment which obstructs general enclosure; and by taking such measures as would tend to give greater encouragement to the cultivation of arable land. At present many circumstances operate which have a direct contrary tendency; the tithe of arable land is much heavier than of grass land, and the multiplication of horses kept for pleasure affords, perhaps, upon the whole, more encouragement to the cultivation of hay than of corn. To meet the difficulty of the present year, other measures may be necessary, and Parliament will, I trust, adopt such as are suited to the degree of scarcity which prevails. The use of wheat should be prohibited in every mode which does not tend to the food of man; liberal bounties should be offered upon importation; which, while they hold out sufficient encouragement to the merchant, must be granted with that degree of care and caution, which shall secure the public from fraud. And if upon the fair result of those inquiries, of which I have before spoken, it should appear that the crop of the present year is deficient in a much greater degree than it is at present supposed, and that there is little probability of supplying a great part of that deficiency by the surplus produce of other countries, it would then be risking too much to trust to voluntary restraint, and the force of example, to ensure a sufficient saving; a positive law should in that case limit the consumption, and no wheat should be permitted to be ground, without the mixture of a certain proportion of barley or of other grain. The object Parliament must have in view should be to make the stock last the whole year; and in effecting this object, it must be recollected that scarcely any old wheat was left on hand at the period of the late harvest, and that therefore the consumption of the new crop was begun upon much earlier than usual. If Parliament errs in undertaking the amount of our supply, we may submit to some degree of unnecessary privation; if it errs in overrating it, famine will but too certainly ensue. In the degree to which I am now supposing the scarcity may possibly prevail (though I am far from thinking it goes to this extent), nothing would be so alarming as that people should not be alarmed enough; but even if it should exist in the greatest degree that any body has yet imagined, let us only firmly and resolutely adopt measures which are proportionate to it, and the difficulty vanishes. Parliament, it is true, cannot turn scarcity into plenty, but it may provide against many of the evils which would naturally arise from it. Its deliberations on this interesting point will, I trust, be marked by fairness, by candour, and by cool and dispassionate discussion. It will have firmness enough not to sacrifice sound and substantial principles to the pressure of the moment; and while it provides for the present, it will not be unmindful of the wants of a future day.

This leads me to take notice of an opinion entertained by some persons (and by some whom I very much respect), that, in such a state of the markets as we have lately seen, it would be expedient to fix the *maximum* of wheat, or of bread, with the view of enabling every person to supply himself with these articles at a cheaper rate. The objections to this plan are, that it would encourage a consumption disproportionate to the supply, which can never be so well regulated as by a rising or a falling price; and it would discourage what it is so essential to promote, the importation from foreign parts. The adoption of such a measure would not only assume that the actual price was much higher than the stock on hand warranted, but that the precise degree, in which it was higher, could be ascertained. Now this we all know to be impossible. But would such a measure be just? The farmer sowed his corn in the confidence that he was to have the largest price he could get for it: you may force him, it is true, to sell it at a certain rate, but you cannot force him to sow any more. In the present state of things, those who think the profits of the farmer have been the most exorbitant, should surely hesitate before they take a step which, though it might relieve the want of the moment, would certainly tend in future to discourage the general agriculture of the country. It is not enough to say, that the *maximum* shall be set so high, that, generally speaking, the farmer shall be a gainer—what will that man say to your average whose crop has almost totally failed, and who, even at the high price of the market, is a loser? Will you make him a greater loser by arbitrarily reducing the price of his corn? The profits of the farmer, from the high price of the commodities in which he deals, have certainly been very great; but it must not be forgotten that the principal cause of the price being so high is, that his crop has been so small. Another objection to a *maximum* is, that it has always a great tendency to become a *minimum*. If you say to a man, you shall not sell the article in which you deal for more than a certain price, he will do his utmost not to sell it for less; and if any thing could produce a combination among corn-dealers, and furnish them with a pretext for combining, it would be this very measure. If it were worth pursuing the point further, it might be shown, that the difficulties in the execution of it would be insurmountable. The same *maximum* could not apply universally throughout the kingdom, nor could it be set correctly in every different place, according to all the variety of circumstances which operate upon price. The objection of occasioning a consumption disproportionate to the supply, applies also to a measure, which has been taken, with the very best intentions, by gentlemen in different parts of the country.

I mean that of entering into agreements to sell wheat at a cheap rate, or of dealing it out at a reduced price to their labourers: this practice, as far as it goes, is aggravating the evil it is meant to cure; it is risking a famine to avoid a scarcity. If the adoption of such a plan is partial and confined to a particular parish, every neighbouring parish is discontented; if it becomes general, it encourages an undue consumption. But far be it from me to check the bounty of any individual at the present moment; never was there a time when the poor man called more loudly for assistance: all I would do, should be to direct it into the most useful channel. When the high price of wheaten bread, the ordinary food of a great part of the people, places it, in a great degree, out of their reach, the greatest kindness to them as well as the most valuable charity, is to encourage the use of every substitute, and to deal out to them, with a liberal hand, any other article which contributes to the sustenance of man.

In all nations the high price of provisions has been eagerly seized upon by the disaffected, as the readiest instrument for promoting their views. They are aware that, while this subject of complaint endures, many, who have no other feeling in common with them, will hastily embrace some of their opinions, and enlist, for a time at least, under their banners. In this country the promoters of sedition, who have lately hidden themselves in holes and corners, in silent malignity, have not suffered this opportunity entirely to escape; they have in some places again put forth their heads, have joined the clamours of the mob, and have been instrumental in leading them to the houses, the mills, and the barns, of those whom they chose to brand with the character of monopolists. Such men know by experience, that, in this country, they never have so little chance of success as when they depend upon the intrinsic merits of their own cause; they know how necessary it is for their purpose to press into their service every discontent, and to mingle every complaint, from whatever source it may arise, with their pretended grievances; but, whatever may be the object of such persons, a moment's reflection must convince every honest man, that, in times of dearth and scarcity, nothing is so likely to lessen those evils, and to promote the object of his wishes, as the strictest obedience to the laws; and that tumult and commotion necessarily obstruct those channels through which the supply must come, from which he is to be fed.

It is not more the duty of Parliament to employ itself anxiously and diligently in devising every safe expedient which may contribute to relieve the wants of the people at the present moment, and provide for those wants in future, than it is that of the magistracy

to be circumspect, active, and firm, in watching carefully every tendency to riot; in adopting the most vigorous measures for the suppression of tumult, in protecting the property of the farmer, the corn-dealer, the miller, and the baker; and in establishing that good order and confidence so necessary to ensure the free circulation of grain, and the conveyance of supplies to every part of the kingdom, without which, even if the barns of the farmer should be full, the market will be empty; and without which we may experience the horrors of famine, though not with plenty in the land, yet with a sufficiency to save us from actual want.

I have avoided carefully giving any opinion upon the degree in which the crop of the present year falls short of the average produce; no accounts which have been yet received are sufficiently general or correct, to warrant a statement of its precise amount. If the deficiency is over-rated, it spreads alarm unnecessarily and increases the price; if it is under-rated, it puts us off our guard and encourages an improvident consumption: before therefore the actual amount of this deficiency is stated, the most precise and positive information of which the nature of the subject admits, should be obtained. The farmers, from whom the information must chiefly be collected, are disposed generally to represent the quantity in their possession as less than it really is, and it is probable, therefore, that the estimated amount of the crop may be, in some degree, under-rated. There is no doubt, however, that there is a deficiency; there is as little doubt that the means of supplying it, or of counteracting its effects, are completely within our reach. Large supplies, it is known, may be obtained from foreign parts, and the measure of proposing to Parliament an encouraging bounty for the purpose of bringing them to this country, is determined upon; the same plan which was formerly adopted by the more opulent classes, of limiting the use of wheat in their families, will undoubtedly be again readily resorted to; and the liberal encouragement held out by the East India Company to the importers of rice, will furnish a large supply of provision before the next harvest. All these considerations tend to relieve our apprehensions; and, upon the whole, there appears to be not only no danger of famine; but from the disposition to meet the difficulty, which seems to manifest itself, there is reason to hope, that when the causes of high price, which have been stated to apply peculiarly to the present moment, cease to operate, the poorer classes of society may be, in a great measure, if not wholly, relieved from the pressure of that calamity which they now endure.

I am well aware that several of the points which I have noticed in these few remarks have been rather touched upon, than fully and completely argued. Erroneous and mischievous doctrines appeared to be gaining ground, and I have endeavoured shortly

and distinctly to observe upon them, without entering into minute discussion. Upon a question on which opinions are so various, I am not presumptuous or sanguine enough to suppose that many persons will agree entirely in mine; but if, upon a subject so interesting to all, I shall have induced any person to investigate further the topics which I have stated, removed one false notion, or suggested one useful hint, my object will be attained, and my endeavours most amply rewarded.

November 8th, 1800.

SPEECH

OF

J. C. CURWEN, ESQ.

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON THE 21ST OF FEBRUARY 1817.

ON A MOTION

FOR A COMMITTEE TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION

THE

POOR LAWS.

London:

1817.

SPEECH, &c.

Mr. Speaker,

In compliance with my notice, it now becomes my duty to bring under the consideration of the House a question of the most vital importance to the general interests of the country.—Deeply affecting the prosperity and happiness of all ranks, so vast the objects connected with the subject, so interwoven with the distresses of the country, that in tracing this operation, my mind has been so appalled that I have frequently felt ready to abandon the undertaking in despair. Nothing but a sense of duty, and a firm conviction that the country would consider it as a dereliction of public duty, have given me courage to proceed. The House will do me the justice to recollect that I undertook the task in a former sessions, in consideration of a promise exacted from me by my constituents. I then felt, as all have felt who have attempted an amendment of the system of the Poor Laws, the difficulties which attended it. The task was then comparatively easy. The distresses of the country were infinitely less—in proportion as the necessity of supplying a remedy has increased, so have the difficulties of effecting it. Under this conviction I applied

to His Majesty's ministers to take the matter into their own hands: I professed also my readiness to resign the task to any gentleman more equal to do it justice. Failing in these applications I had only the choice of difficulties. I have preferred the sacrifice of every personal consideration to an imputation of indifference to the sufferings under which the country labors.

Measures, Sir, which are designed to effect great and important changes belong exclusively to the executive government. With them rests the responsibility: They possess superior sources of information: they alone have the influence to carry into effect such changes. They have the co-operation and aid of the first information and abilities on all subjects at command, and under their united auspices measures can be so digested and arranged as not to be subject to material changes from the shape in which they are first introduced to the notice of this House and of the public. Widely different is the case with any individual, and especially the one who addresses you. I have now to submit to the House a plan on a subject, on which persons most distinguished for abilities who have made a similar attempt have failed—without any co-operation or assistance from almost an individual in or out of this House, compelled to hazard speculations at a time when the minds of all classes in society are agitated by their sufferings without knowing how they can be relieved. Permit me to observe that I differ most widely from those who seem to consider that the mere agitation of the question will satisfy the public. I believe directly the contrary effect will be produced, and that infinite mischief may be done, if we go into a committee, and that out of it should proceed no measure of relief. Great evils must arise out of the propositions that I have to submit to the House, should they be totally rejected. Pressing as this danger is, still

greater danger impels me to act. Some measures to meet the magnitude of the evils of the moment are indispensably requisite. By these observations, I do not, however, Sir, mean to insinuate any thing invidious to ministers, or to anticipate that they can have any interest in my failure. Though perfectly unacquainted with their views, I am satisfied and give them full credit for being aware of the dreadful state of the country. One cause, and a very principal one, arises out of the unjust pressure of the Poor Laws. Without any claims for support on that side of the House or this, I have and shall continue to proceed in this business (with no view but that which is felt by every gentleman in common with myself,) and endeavor to benefit the country and reanimate its exertions.

Sensible of the indulgence of the House in a former sessions, I shall not now, Sir, abuse it, or occupy a longer portion of their time than is indispensibly necessary to explain what I have to submit to their consideration. I do not propose to enter into the particular hardships which arise out of the defects of the existing laws relative to the poor. By the numerous valuable communications with which I have been favored from various quarters of the country, I am fully satisfied that were all the just complaints which they contain redressed, there is not a statute relating to the subject that would not require to be revised and amended. My endeavor on the present occasion will be to consider the general effect of the principle of the 43d of Eliz. as now construed; to show the injustice and oppression of the laws as at present executed for raising the sums necessary for the support of the poor; to call on the House to amend, not to create new laws, so as to divide the burden more fairly and equally; to point out the indispensible necessity for providing for a crisis which cannot be distant, I mean the failure of voluntary contributions.

I shall submit with great deference a plan for substituting other resources for the maintenance and bettering the situation of the poor by destroying the baneful, pestilential effects of the Poor Laws. Were every regulation respecting the poor as perfect as human wisdom could devise, were there no ground for a single complaint on this head, still, Sir, we should not have advanced a single step towards the correction of the evil under which the country now labors, an evil coeval with the existence of the system itself. Still I do not attribute the mischiefs which have arisen out of the 43rd Eliz. to its inventors; quite the contrary—the wisdom and humanity of the plan does infinite honor to the head and heart of those with whom it originated. The support and maintenance of the old, lame, blind and impotent, was conformable to a duty of higher influence than human institutions. The construing and acting upon this law, by those who had to administer relief under it, has introduced what is evidently foreign to its intention. It was never designed to give a right of support and maintenance to those who, by the practice of frugality, sobriety and industry, might have supported themselves, but who have become chargeable by their crimes and misconduct. It never had in contemplation that men should anticipate parochial support as a source of maintenance for themselves and families,—nor did it intend to take away from the laboring classes all interest and concern in their own well-being. It did not contemplate the total destruction of independence, or that so large a proportion of the community should view the present moment as the sole object worthy of their attention. These, Sir, are the evils which have arisen out of the administration of that act. For two hundred and fifty years the attention of legislators has at different times been directed to the consideration of expedients to stop the growing evil: whilst the country remained wholly

agricultural, the progress of this malady was slow. Since we have become a manufacturing people, its increase has been out of all measure and calculation, rapid. In 1776, the amount of the Poor-Rates was 1,530, 800*l.* In forty three years, they are augmented, I verily believe, to eight millions and a half. Admitting the system to continue, can it be doubted that it will stop short of swallowing up the whole revenue and industry of the country, extinguishing at the same time every vestige of respectability and happiness among the poor? Each successive augmentation of the burden has been attended with a proportionable increase of misery. Pauperism contaminates all who come within its vortex—Foreigners contemplate with astonishment the sums provided in Great Britain for the poor, which, with the addition of endowments to charities, exceed nine millions annually, a revenue possessed by few sovereigns in Europe. Dazzling as this appears at a distance, what are its effects when viewed more closely? Does it produce happiness, content, and gratitude among the poor? No, Sir! discontent, gloom and misery pervade all who partake of it. Not a particle of gratitude, not more of contentment is to be found.

We hear perpetually of the wretched state in which the Irish peasant is doomed to exist: when examined, on the first glance, it does indeed shock an English eye. Accustomed, as we are, to see a more liberal distribution of the comforts of life among the lower orders, we commiserate the situation of those whom we see deprived of what habit leads us to view as the first necessaries of life. Their clothing scanty and worn out; their cabins mean, and in disrepair: the earthen floor, a few boards and a wretched straw pallet, their bed; a stool or two, and an iron pot forming their whole mènage: their sole food potatoes: salt and buttermilk, their luxuries. Such are the outward objects in view. But those who have the courage to examine

more minutely into the condition of this hardy race, and to judge by *their own* feelings, and not by ours, may draw conclusions very opposite to those which first strike the eye. The inhabitant of this wretched abode will be observed cheerful; kind-hearted, affectionate, charitable, in the highest degree; with the strongest sense of his duties as a son, a husband, and a parent, and happy in their execution. In the midst of his privations, his independent, unsubdued spirit supports him. It is the mind which imprints the stamp of happiness or misery. The Irish peasant, amidst all his wants and sufferings, appears far superior to the unhappy victim of pauperism in this country. I was so struck, Sir, with a result so contrary to my preconceived opinions and first impressions, that I visited in a circuit of above a thousand miles in Ireland, hundreds of cabins, to assure myself of this fact, and excepting in great towns, the result was almost universal. That great moralist, and philosopher, Dr. Paley, has observed on this subject, that "happiness consists in the exercise of the social affections; that those persons commonly possess good spirits who have about them many objects of affection and endearment, as wife, children, kindred, friends." Now the condition of the Irish peasant is such as to call forth and exercise these social affections, in a higher degree, and more frequently, than is the case with the English peasant. The effect of the Poor-Laws is here to destroy all the best and most kindly feelings of the heart. It jaundices the eye and prevents it from deriving comfort from what it possesses: every benefit granted to one, is considered by others as an injury done them: thus envy and jealousy are perpetually engendered. The contrast is observable between this class, and the industrious, frugal and sober peasant, who tempers the interest of the present with that of the future, providing for the necessities of both. Between the com-

forts of his existence and that of the pauper, the distance is so great, the advantages so preponderant, that I have no words to express it. The difference is as striking as between a day of sunshine and a day of gloom. The legislature is called on to stay this evil from motives higher and more dignified than any which self-interest can dictate. Every feeling of humanity and love of man for man implanted in the hearts of all, bids us restore happiness and respectability to two millions and a half of fellow-Englishmen.

So great, Sir, has become the amount of the relief levied for the poor, that it cannot be removed without substituting something in its place. To correct the mischief will require a length of time. If a principle can be adopted by which the laboring classes can be elevated in the scale of society, and tempted to contribute towards their own necessities by the hopes of greater and more substantial comforts, it will, in time, make its way. Such a plan, I do conceive, may be adopted, as I shall hereafter attempt to show. It is some satisfaction to me that my views, last sessions, on this subject have, as far as the communications received enabled me to judge, been very generally approved, though some doubts have been expressed on the expediency of adopting them at present. The impossibility of suggesting any plan that would be universally applicable to all situations, gives additional weight to my project. I propose, Sir, to leave it to every parish to frame and adopt the regulations best suited to its situation. Great are the difficulties generally accompanying any alterations in legislative measures of this importance. Here, if any should arise, a remedy would be immediately at hand to remove any incongruity which might appear in adapting it to the local situation. You would

have the abilities and cooperation of the whole country at work to bring the scheme to perfection.

Whatever, Sir, might be my former opinions, I have so far changed them as not to propose to the House to adopt the measure I last year detailed to them as compulsory, but rather to submit it as a measure and experiment to be adopted when the majority of the parishioners of any parish were disposed to try it. I am sanguine in my belief it would answer, and impose a very light burden on the whole community. With great increased comforts, to be exempt from the horrible, and yet I admit necessary, coercion of a poor-house, would lead every reflecting person to contribute cheerfully to the fund for general support. The administration and management of the poor being in part in the hands of the poor would secure tenderness in the administration of relief, whilst it would give consequence to them as a body. In parishes that should adopt the plan, I propose that the construction of the 43d of Eliz. should be strictly adhered to, and that parish funds should be provided for the relief of those who come within its operation. To all above a certain age, relief should be afforded under the present laws. It has been objected to my plan that it would have the effect of raising wages. Should that be the case, I do not think it would ultimately be injurious to the general interests of the country. What are the poor-rates in many places, but a mode of payment of wages, and that the very worst sort, as it breaks the spirit, and destroys the independence of the laborer? In order to effect a cure, a complete alteration is necessary in the whole system of our poor laws.

Great and imperious as is the call on us, Sir, to apply some remedy to the existing evils, we have at present a still more pressing demand on us: that is, to devise means

for making the existing laws for the support of the poor, adequate to the purpose.

Here it is, Sir, I feel peculiarly, that I am occupying ground which ought to have been exclusively in the hands of others. Yet I must have been both blind and insensible to every feeling of humanity, to every duty imposed on those who have intrusted to them the interests of the public, had I passed over this part of the subject in silence. Awful is the crisis—every hour adds to and increases it. Eminent is the danger in numerous districts, both in the mnufacturing and the agricultural. The whole amount of income arising from real property will be inadequate to the support of the poor—so dreadfully are they increased. I shall not dwell longer than can be avoided on this painful subject; but to justify my appeal to the House, and the measures I shall have the honor to propose, I must lay some foundation. There are indeed already petitions on your table that bear out this statement. Of the communications received, I shall instance one or two. Those from Sheffield are particularly worthy of attention. The paper I hold in my hand was published by the overseers of the poor, addressed to the magistrates of the West-riding, and was communicated, as I am given to understand, to his Majesty's ministers. It states that on the 29th of November last, there were 840 families relieved: that on the 10th of January they had increased to 1504. That the weekly payment had arisen from 200*l.* to 500*l.*; that Mr. Girdler, a farmer of 210 acres, paid a guinea a day towards the relief of the poor, but must now be called on to double the sum. That if this state of things continued two months longer, the town would be utterly unable to raise the sum requisite for the support of the poor. That other townships in Sheffield parish were in no better situation. It states also the noble struggles made by many of the artizans to

avoid being chargeable: many had sold furniture and other articles to the amount of thirty pounds, and had exhausted every resource, before asking for relief. Here I must call on the House to consider one class of persons at present contributing much to the augmentation of the burdens; I mean persons who themselves heretofore paid their share of the rates, instead of receiving any part of them. The artizan and the small shop-keeper, many of this most respectable and industrious class of society, have been forced into the dreadful gulph of pauperism. The decreased value of land has fallen, Sir, with peculiar hardship on this class of society. The rent of their dwellings has not fallen in proportion. The advance of the rates is probably five per cent, from this cause alone; but more still on them, as their rents remain undiminished. How much farther the mischief will go, unless your wisdom and humanity interfere to stop it, I pretend not to conjecture. Sir, I have communications from Shropshire saying that the poor rates are 19 and 20 shillings in the pound. From the neighbourhood of Aylesbury, also I have similar accounts. From Sussex, I have statements of 25 shillings in the pound. I will not trouble the House with more, but proceed to lay before them what I conceive to be the present state of poor rates, on the average, of England. In 1803, Mr. Rose calculated the revenue of the country at 34 millions, adding four millions to the amount for canals, mines, and personal property of different descriptions assessed, making a total of 38 millions. The number of paupers was then 1,234,768; their maintenance 4,267, 965, equal to 12½ per cent. on the capital taxed. In 1815 the revenue of land and houses had advanced to above 52 millions: adding four millions according to Mr. Rose's computation, the amount is 56 millions; that of poor rates being 6,400,000, and of

paupers 2,000,000, made it 16 per cent. Admitting the revenue to have fallen in 1817 to 35,000,000, it would add one third to the amount of the poor rate, and make it 20 per cent. Now, Sir, taking the increase of paupers in 1817 to be 500,000, and the advance of rate at 2,000,000, the increased expense of necessaries of life augmenting the cost will make the poor rates not less, probably, than eight millions and half, or 26 per cent. on the actual amount of real property.

The amount of dividends and interest payable to the public creditor may be calculated at		32,000,000
In six millions of India stock, ...		300,000
Four millions South Sea stock, ...		200,000
Income of the bank on twelve millions worth 24,000,000, ...		1,200,000
		33,700,000
Ten per cent. on the produce would produce	3,370,000	

a sum amply sufficient to equalize the rates of the whole kingdom, and to supersede the necessity either of a general, or more extended assessment.

The next source of income, and which spreads itself over the whole kingdom, would be the interest arising from personal property.

Supposing two hundred millions, producing, at five per Cent.	10,000,000
20,000,000*l.* the produce of trade,	2,000,000
1,761,453 tons of shipping, producing now half what it did, at	1,000,000
	13,000,000

Ten per cent. on this 13,000,000

Making a total of .. 4,670,000

Personal property, ...	4,670,000
which with 12½ per Cent. from land,	4,375,000
Making	9,045,000

The great and immediate relief such a measure would afford, would tend most materially to relieve the agricultural and commercial interests.

I should not propose this plan for more than three years, by which time it may be confidently hoped that the agriculture and commerce of the country may be greatly revived.

The pressure of the poor laws at this time, is in an inverse ratio to the power of sustaining its burden. Every hand that is discharged, the profit of his productive labor is lost to the state, whilst he claims support from a diminished source. Thus is the evil daily spreading, whilst the power of supporting is decreased.

Nothing can so effectually reanimate the active exertions of the country, as relieving it from its burdens. I am decidedly averse to every plan that would enhance the price of the necessaries of life, in order to keep up the price of land: this system has occasioned much mischief to the trade and commerce of the country: our commercial system has given umbrage to every nation in Europe. We must unshackle trade, and by conferring reciprocal benefits, advantage both ourselves and other nations. It is the enormous taxation which has forced this system on the country. The return of peace has reanimated the industry of other countries, and we must either be enabled to serve them cheaper, or they will cease to be our customers.

Whilst we offer them the produce of our staple manufactories, we must receive theirs in return.

In looking to the resources by which the radical evils of the system of the poor laws can be corrected, we must have recourse to the people whose income exceeds in amount that of all other classes together. I have made the calculation on five millions of persons earning at the rate of 12*s*. a week. Mr. Colquhoon, in his recent publication, calculates that in the united empire, there are ten millions of persons employed in different manual occupations, and earning wages amounting in the year to three hundred and thirty-one millions. If we take England and Wales as two-thirds, compared with Scotland and Ireland, the earnings of labor would amount to two hundred and twenty millions. Could the whole people be led to feel their interest and happiness combined in making a small weekly sacrifice of two and a half per cent. on the produce of their labor, its yearly amount would be three millions and a half. But, Sir, the effect would be much greater, from the economy, frugality, and industry, that would spring from it. Such a change would quickly lessen the demands on the funds: there would be few, except from accident or misfortune, who would become burdensome. The seamen actually do at this moment contribute liberally out of their wages to Greenwich Hospital. The measure is not therefore new, even in practice. Is this complained of? No.—I believe it is cheerfully paid, although its amount must exceed two and a half per cent. on their wages.

A deduction to this amount from the earnings of labor, would produce, then, three millions and a half. Besides the direct benefit which would result from the addition of a sum so considerable to the funds now dedicated to the support of the poor, its tendency would be to induce the

laboring classes to extend their views beyond the present moment. The enjoyments of the present moment are alone the object of attention to the poor: to them the present is every thing; the future nothing. To this may be attributed those premature marriages, from which spring such misery. To check these, you must bring mankind back to reflect and to balance individual enjoyment with the misery by which it is to be purchased. It is a subject beyond the reach of legislation; the only restraint which can prevent it, must arise out of the mind, by the combination of the present with the future.

I am not unaware, Sir, that my plan may by possibility create some jealousy in the breasts of those who patronize the system of Saving Banks, and that they may be thought in some degree to clash with each other. This can only arise from a misconception of the subject. That the establishment of Saving Banks is likely to be productive of much good, will not be questioned; as little, that the country owes essential obligation to the Right Honorable Gentleman now in my eye, under whose auspices, and by whose powerful recommendation, they have become so widely extended: but when held up as a remedy likely to stay the baneful effects of pauperism, I must confess that this appears to me to go beyond all fair and rational expectations. That the Friendly Societies have generally failed, is much to be regretted.—And what has been the cause? The insufficiency, I fear, of their funds, to meet the exigencies of the parties, leaving the members still dependent on parochial relief. That the savings which could reasonably be expected from individuals in humble life, could ever be made adequate to the wants of themselves and families, in all cases, can by no means be expected.

The establishment I propose strongly distinguishes reliance on the poor-laws: it combines with the savings of the parties, the contributions of other classes; it opens to the poor greater comfort than they could otherwise obtain—the security of their own mansion; education of their children; rewards for meritorious conduct.—It embraces a still farther and more important object,—the participation in the government and distribution of these funds. They who have ever been taught to look only to those above them for support, would henceforth look to their equals: it would bestow on the laboring classes a new character: they would acquire rights, the exercise of which would bring them into contact with their superiors: the value and blessing of education would be developed: the intelligence, the talents of the people—that good sense of which so large a portion is to be found amongst them, would have full scope given them. The road to respectability and consideration being thus opened, what might not reasonably be expected to result from it? Would it not kindle in the breast of all that class of society, a spirit of emulation? Whilst they looked up with admiration and pride to the consequence attained by one of their own class, they would be led to aspire to the same honorable distinction: it is the operation of this principle that must furnish the antidote to the present evils.

To show the facility with which the fund could be raised by interesting the people in their own cause, I shall instance what is daily under my own eye. The township of Workington contains 8500 souls: the sum raised for the maintenance of the poor is 2,000*l.*; four hundred pounds of which is applied to other purposes, the actual charge for their support is then 1,600*l.*: the real property of the township is about ten thousand per annum.

Now, Sir, these rates are levied with the greatest difficulty, particularly from the inferior classes of artizans, and little shop-keepers; the distress which they sometimes occasion to useful members of the community, cannot but excite the most painful feelings in the minds of those who are compelled to enforce their payment.

In the same place, four hundred individuals now raise without a complaint or remonstrance, nearly 700*l.*, which, with the contribution of one third from the proprietor, making together about 1,000*l.*, equals one half of what the whole township raises with such difficulty. Now, Sir, assuming that in the same place there are 2,500 persons earning in various ways their subsistance by labor, whose earnings average 12*s.* per week, or 70,000, 2½ per cent. on that sum would produce 1,500
10 per cent. on land and houses, ... 1,000

2,500

From this it is evident that 1½ per cent.
on labor producing, ... 750
And 7½ per cent. on land, ... 750

1500

would raise 1500*l.* more than equal to what the poor costs at this time, not including the charges arising from bastards. Three half-pence, or even three pence out of every ten shillings earned, would not be a burden that the laborer ought to feel if he was adequately paid. Its amount would not exceed the defalcation from wages which arises from the practice too frequent in manufacturing towns, and indeed elsewhere, of paying the weekly wages, in a public house, to the journeyman and labourer. I must observe also that

when this plan was adopted, the 43d of Elizabeth, strictly construed, must exist, for the maintenance of those whose misfortunes disabled from administering to their own support. Where men contributed towards their own maintenance, the laws of settlement might be rendered at once more simple: there would be less apprehension of men's becoming burdensome by acquiring settlements: all the endless litigation that now costs so large a portion of the rates, would be avoided.

From the demand for labor arising occasionally in consequence of our becoming a great manufacturing country, individuals of the sister kingdoms are taught to flock to those places where hands are wanted. Is it reasonable, after a life spent in promoting the wealth and prosperity of the place of their residence, that in their old age, they should be sent back to the spot which gave them birth, where no trace of them is left, without friend, relation, or any soul to console the concluding days of a miserable existence. The change of the times requires that our fellow subjects of Ireland and Scotland should be able to gain a settlement and close their lives in the place where their years of active industry had been spent. A further strong motive arises, I apprehend, for adopting a measure like that which I recommend, which will put it in their power by contributing a part of their earnings to lay up a fund by means of their own honest industry for the hour of sickness or misfortune.

For twenty years back the pride and ambition of my life has been to be instrumental in promoting the measure of the nature with that which has now so unexpectedly fallen to my lot to propose. Viewing it merely as a measure of experiment, I do not despair, if it be adopted, of seeing it speedily and extensively put in practice.

In order fairly to understand the situation of the real property of the kingdom, we must take from the thirty-five millions at which I compute its revenue, one million for county rates, and other public charges; for repairs; and various losses by failure of tenants, &c. ten per cent on three millions and a half, leaving nett to the proprietors thirty millions and a half. Now, Sir, this is the actual state of receipt. How does it stand, compared with the revenue of the public creditor? Is the funded or unfunded debt less than thirty-two millions? Should it be even one million and a half less, still it will equal the whole revenue of the kingdom. Is it consistent with justice that such an amount of property should escape from any participation in the support of the poor? admitting for a moment that parliament had pledged its faith to the public creditor that he should be exempt from his share in succouring the miseries of his fellow creatures, I would not hesitate to say it had exceeded its powers, and attempted what was beyond its province. Charity is of divine institution: It stoops not to distinguish and discriminate: It knows no distinction of properties: It is an imperious duty, binding on all—crime and infamy would deservedly attach on an attempt to bar the rights of humanity. But none such will be made. The immutable principle of justice which directs the policy of parliament has led them to enact that all property shall be liable to contribute to the support of the poor. There wants no new law. It only requires additional machinery to bring into action the laws already in existence. Within these walls this will scarcely be doubted: I shall however refer to two or three decisions on the point.

In 1633, the judges resolved "*that the personal, visible ability of the inhabitant might be rated: in a subsequent*

case, that every inhabitant should be charged in respect of his personal estate and ability."

More recently, in the reign of Geo. I. the King versus the inhabitants of Clerkenwell, on the validity of a poor rate made upon a land tax assessment, it was quashed by the court of King's-bench as being an unequal taxation: "*because the personal estate in the public funds is not chargeable to the land tax, but is chargeable to the poor rates.*"

The same doctrine has always been held, and the failure of taxing personal property has arisen from the difficulties which attend it. No doubt as to its liability has ever been entertained. The grounds on which the assessment of personal property has generally failed have been the difficulties of proof, the onus resting with the overseer. The showing also any other species of property unassessed, subjects the rate to be quashed,—the office of overseer being annual, few can be supposed willing to expose themselves to the odium and troublesome litigation of such a measure. Reverse the law, and let the proofs rest with the parties assessed and we shall soon see personal prosperity bearing its just proportion of this oppressive burden.[1] If the necessities of the state in war justified a deviation from former policy, will not the suffering state of the poor now plead for them with tenfold force? The public creditor might here plead exemption in all wars which have occurred since the first institution of the funding system. Sir, I do not know that this was ever urged. The necessity was felt so strong, that the justice of the question was not called in

[1] Such is said to be the practice in the island of Jersey. Each man is there rated both for his real and personal income, to the relief of the poor. If he thinks himself aggrieved in the rate, he is entitled to a reduction, on proof that he is overcharged.

question. How far do the present calls of humanity outweigh that of war? though the general law will justify the assessment of the fund, its application would be so endless that the object would be defeated. I should therefore propose calling in funded property to take its share of the burden, that the sum arising from it should form a fund for equalizing the rates throughout the kingdom, and be employed in aid of the parochial fund, where the sums raised exceeded in a certain proportion the rate now levied, or due, on real ratable property. The accounts to be audited and allowed by the sessions. That would afford an ample source and be effectual to its purposes. A further and most beneficial appropriation of this fund would be by holding out its aid to such parishes in which the laboring classes should associate for their mutual relief. If an annual million was dedicated to tempt the laboring classes to become independent by means of their own foresight and œconomy, it would be well and wisely bestowed; and thus one third would be added to the amount of their individual contributions.

Deeply sensible as we must all be of the evils arising from the present burden of the poor rates, alarming as is the view of their progressive rise, and the expectation of their still further increase, however pressing the call on the attention of the legislature on this ground alone, yet, Sir, there are other motives of a still higher nature to stimulate us. The imputation would, I am assured, be unjust that on this occasion we were actuated by selfish views only. There are other interests to which we must attend, as important as those of the class of society who contribute to the maintenance of the poor. Yes, Sir, the poor themselves have a still higher interest in the correction of the system, which whilst it wastes your means, destroys their happiness. Let the laboring classes in England have

the subject freely laid before them, and I will venture to say you will have their blessing if you can devise a plan to restore to them independence and respectability.

I cannot conclude without addressing myself to the Noble Lord in the blue ribband. Great as was the glory in which you participated with the heroes of Waterloo, unfading as will be the laurels which their valor acquired, a more glorious, a more important victory is within your reach: a victory unpurchased by blood and misery. If out of this committee, which I trust may have the good fortune to reckon you as the most distinguished of its members, you, my lord, can give effect to a measure that shall stop the baneful progress of pauperism and misery, shall plant the germ of happiness in the breast of the rising generation, shall restore to the people of England that independence and honest pride which give estimation to industry, œconomy and temperance, your name will be numbered amongst those of the first and greatest benefactors to your country.

A

LETTER

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE

EARL OF LIVERPOOL,

ON THE

New Coinage.

BY

THOMAS SMITH,

Accountant,

Author of "An Essay on the Theory of Money," &c. &c.

LONDON:

1817.

A

LETTER,

&c. &c.

My Lord,

It has long been considered one of the great privileges in the constitution of this country, that every person is at liberty to deliver his sentiments upon all questions of public interest; that no man, however obscure or unknown he may be, can be deprived of his right, provided he does not make an improper use of it. The freedom of the press has, however, been too frequently and too ably panegyrized for me to attempt saying any thing further in its favour. I merely mention it as an excuse for an obscure and humble individual presuming to address your Lordship on a question of the greatest public importance.

It is now eight years since I first took advantage of this privilege, since I first endeavoured to call the attention of the public to what I conceived to be the real Theory of Money and the nature of coins. When the Report of the Bullion-Committee was published, I had the temerity to attack that Report, and to point out the errors they had committed, and the mistakes they had been led into, in consequence of having assumed, what appeared to me to be, wrong data to proceed upon. Since then, I have availed myself of several opportunities to produce further proofs of the justness of my Theory. Perfectly aware, however, of the very great difficulty of effecting a general change of opinion, and of establishing a new Theory, upon an abstruse subject; and, more especially, when long-existing prejudices were to be combated, I did not expect that it would immediately meet with universal assent. I therefore rested myself contented with finding it gradually making its way,

with finding it supported by men of great talents and information; and I looked forward to the time when it would come, by degrees, to be adopted by the public at large. In this hope I was confirmed, by having been led to believe, from the manner in which your Lordship and the Chancellor of the Exchequer opposed the resolutions, founded upon the Report of the Bullion-Committee, and from the resolutions you yourselves then brought forward, that if you were not strenuous supporters of my Theory, you were, at least, favourable to it. The events that have happened since, also confirmed my hopes, because they have most completely contradicted the doctrines laid down by the Bullion-Committee.

In this state of mind, I had just been meditating upon drawing up a short sketch of those events, accompanied with some tables, to shew how much the doctrines of the Bullion-Committee had been refuted, and mine established, by the experience of the last five years, when I was awakened from my dream, and my hopes completely overthrown, by finding that his Majesty's ministers, in bringing forward a most important measure, had stated, as the foundation upon which that measure was to be carried into effect, the very data formerly assumed by the Bullion-Committee, and which these very ministers had then so successfully opposed.

Upon the subject of a new coinage, more especially a silver one, I believe there is only one opinion in the nation. It is long since I endeavoured to point out the great advantages to be derived from it, nay, the absolute necessity of its being put into immediate execution: against the measure itself, therefore, I have nothing to say. It is only to the manner in which it is proposed to be carried into execution that I object, and on which I have presumed to take the liberty of now addressing your Lordship, not with any great hopes that what I have to suggest on this subject will be listened to, but, because, having already given my opinions to the public, I deem it a duty to that public and myself to endeavour to support those opinions; and because I think that I can shew, that the principles, now brought forward by your Lordship and your colleagues, are very different from those you formerly avowed, are not supported by the authorities you quote; and, if persevered in and acted upon, will only continue the country in the same distress and confusion, in regard to its circulating medium, that it has been labouring under for above a hundred years, in consequence of those very doctrines having been adopted in the end of the seventeenth century.

In bringing forward a motion in the House of Peers, upon the Prince Regent's message in regard to a new silver coinage, your Lordship is reported to have stated, "that the principle or foundation of the measure in contemplation as to the new coinage, was,

that *gold was, both in fact and in law, the standard of value in this country*:" and, therefore, that no alteration was intended to be made in the gold coins. The same assertion is reported to have been made by the gentleman who brought forward the motion, on this subject, in the House of Commons, and the same authorities are reported to have been referred to, by you both. It is this doctrine that I mean to argue against, and which I think, if the reporters are correct, I may safely assume is now the opinion of his Majesty's ministers collectively. I shall, therefore, proceed to shew, in the first place, that it was not the opinion of his Majesty's ministers five years ago; in the second, that it is not supported by the authorities quoted by your Lordship and Mr. W. Pole; and, in the third, that, if it is persevered in and acted upon, the most disastrous consequences will ensue.

To prove the first assertion I think it will only be necessary to state, that this doctrine of *gold being the standard of value* was the foundation of the Report of the Bullion-Committee, and then to recal to your Lordship's recollection and to that of the public in general, the strong and pointed opposition made by your Lordship and your colleagues to this Report, and the Resolutions that were brought forward against it. I cannot immediately lay my hand on the report of the debates at that period, but if my memory serves me, your Lordship moved in the House of Lords, the same resolutions that were moved by Mr. Vansittart in the other House. To those resolutions I beg leave to refer. In them there is certainly no acknowledgment of gold being the standard of value. The substance of Mr. Vansittart's speeches on this occasion were printed and published; they are now lying before me, and I shall take the liberty of making a few quotations from them.

In page 10, he says, "I will not now dwell on a point to which I must hereafter revert, but proceed to one on which the learned gentleman has reasoned largely, and with the greatest confidence, which has been most strongly relied upon by those who, in this long controversy, have reasoned on the same side of the question, and to which no fewer than the first seven of the proposed resolutions seem exclusively directed; I refer to the standard of value. We are told, that our standard is changed or lost; and triumphantly asked, where we shall now find it? One should suppose the standard was something visible and tangible, which had been accidentally mislaid, and that we ought to offer a reward for bringing it back again; *but I affirm, that a standard, in the sense used by these gentlemen, namely, a fixed and invariable weight of the precious metals, as a measure of value, never existed in this country.*"

In page 13, "no limitation of the current weight of gold coin existed down to the year 1774, and therefore all my reasoning

with respect to the silver coin, applies, with equal force, to the gold coin down to that time; and this *ancient, established, invariable* standard, so much talked of, had no existence till within the period of his present Majesty's reign; but what was then made the standard? was it five penny weights, nine grains and a half; (the Mint weight of a new guinea,) for one pound and one shilling, or five penny weights, eight grains, the current weight? The difference is not great, but it destroys the principle of a fixed standard as much as if it were. A fixed standard must be something accurately defined, certain, and invariable; and such a standard the metallic currency of this country has never been."

"I am not inquiring whether, on general principles of policy, we ought not to seek to establish such a standard, but I am contending, that the learned chairman's resolutions are false in fact, and his complaints groundless, for we cannot have lost what we never possessed."

"This discussion is not only important in itself, as overturning the basis of the learned chairman's proposed resolutions, but it is closely connected with the leading doctrine of the Bullion Report, that of the depreciation of bank notes. He says that my propositions are an evasion of the question, and that I ought distinctly either to admit or deny the fact, that *bank notes have lost their standard value*. Now, I do not conceive myself bound either to admit or to deny, that bank notes have lost a value which they never possessed, and which the legal coin of the country never possessed, namely, *a value estimated by a fixed weight of gold or silver bullion*."

In page 52, "The tenth resolution I most decidedly object to. It proposes to Parliament to declare that which is not, and never has been true, and the declaration of which must have the most alarming effects: it either means that bank notes have lost their relative value, compared with the current coin which they represent—a proposition which I have already shown to be unfounded; or it means, that *the value of bank notes should be measured by the price of bullion, and this is equally untrue*. Bank notes never have been the representatives of any thing but the legal money of the realm, and this they continue to be for every legal and honest purpose as effectually as ever."

In page 148, "What I affirm is, that a fixed and invariable equivalency between our legal money and bullion never has been established by our laws."

I think these quotations are fully sufficient to show, that it was not the opinion of at least some of his Majesty's Ministers, five years ago, that gold was the standard of value in this country. I shall therefore only make one passing observation on this part of the subject—it is, that it might have been expected that a measure

of such great consequence would have been introduced to the House of Commons by the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself, and I can only find one reason for his not having done so—it is the principle upon which the measure was to be founded. The Honourable Gentleman would have felt it rather awkward to have come forward and told the House *that gold was the standard of value, and that it had been proved so by the able Report of the Bullion Committee*, as Mr. W. Pole is reported to have done.

I shall now proceed to examine the evidence which your Lordship and Mr. W. Pole are reported to have brought forward in support of your assertion, that gold is the standard of value in this country both in fact and in law. These are, in addition to the Report of the Bullion Committee, the late Lord Liverpool's Letter to the King, and the acts of 14th and 39th of the present reign. The Report of the Bullion-Committee I hold as no authority; but, if it appeared to me, that the other two evidences bore you out in your assertions, I should not presume to say a single word on the subject.

Your Lordship is reported to have commenced your speech with an eulogium on the work of your late relative. In every thing you said, in regard to that, I most cordially agree with you. I cheerfully acknowledge, that it is a work of great labour, great research, and great ingenuity, and abounding with sound reasoning. But I was astonished when I found your Lordship quoting it in favor of the assertion, that gold was the standard of value, as I could not recollect having met with any such doctrine in that work. To be certain, however, I again ran through it; and, having done so, I confidently maintain, that no such thing is to be found in it. In the first place, there is little or nothing said about bullion, the treatise is "of the coins of the realm," and these only are treated of. In the second place, his Lordship does not appear to make use of the term standard of value at all. When he uses the word standard, it is generally applied to the fineness of gold or silver, not to its value. In his definition of money, he says, the money or coin of a country is the standard measure; and in one other passage, and one only, I believe, he appears to use it in this latter signification. It is in page 135, where he says, "From the time when gold coins were introduced into currency, under the authority of the Sovereign, of a certain weight, and at a certain rate or value, the pound sterling in tale represented a certain quantity or weight of standard gold, in like manner as it represented a certain quantity or weight of standard silver;" but this is done away by the concluding part of the paragraph, which is, "the nominal value of the gold coins was, from time to time, enhanced, or their weight diminished, in proportion as the silver coins were debased by diminishing the weight of

them; and these gold coins equally passed in payment *at the rate or value which the Sovereign thought fit to give them*; and from that time the gold and silver coins were, in fact, as well as by law, equally the measure of property." and still more, by the following paragraph, at page 153,—"Secondly, that, in this kingdom, the gold coins only have been for many years past, and are now, in the practice and opinion of the people, the principal measure of property and instrument of commerce. *The integer or pound sterling*, which, at the accession of William I. was a pound weight of silver, and which, by successive debasements, made by the monarchs of this realm, was reduced, in the 43rd year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, to the $\frac{20}{62}$ parts of a pound troy of standard silver, is now become by the course of events, and by the general consent of the people, the $\frac{20}{21}$ parts of a guinea, or of 5 dwts. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ grs. of standard gold. At as early a period as the year 1485, that is, the first of Henry VII. a gold coin, called a sovereign, then first introduced into circulation, *was intended to represent this integer or pound sterling*. In every subsequent reign to that of James I. gold coins, of the same name and intended *to represent this integer*, were made at the mint of this kingdom: their weight was generally diminished in proportion as the gold coins were, during that period, debased. From the accession of James I. all the new gold coins introduced into circulation *were also intended to represent this integer or pound sterling*, such as the unit, the laurel, and the guinea; for the guinea was originally rated, in the mint indenture, *at one pound sterling*."

From these and other passages, which might be quoted, it evidently appears, that his Lordship, so far from being of opinion that gold *bullion* was the standard of value, does not even give that office to coins; for he calls them, and very properly, only "the measure of property." And how? *According to the rate or value which the Sovereign thinks fit to set upon them*. This description he invariably attaches to them.

In page 131, he says, "From the foregoing short statement it is evident, that, from the time when gold coins were first made in the mints of this kingdom, these gold coins have been equally with the silver coins legal tender, and consequently, the measure of property, *according to the rate or value which the Sovereign thought fit to set upon them*. In page 137. "From the year 1663, the silver coins became, in fact, the only principal measure of property, *according to the rate or value which the Sovereign had set upon them*."

And in page 139, "in the year 1717, *the rate or nominal value* of the gold coins was fixed by proclamation." Indeed, in the commencement of the work, he completely establishes the right of the Sovereign to do this, and at the same time gives a definition of coins exactly correspondent. "*The coins of every kingdom or state are the measure of property and commerce within every such kingdom or*

state, according to the nominal value declared and authorized by the Sovereign, so far as they are made legal tender. In exchanges with foreign countries, and in payments made to them, the intrinsic value of the metal of which the coin is made is the only measure of property and commerce, because the authority of Sovereigns cannot extend to regulate payments made in foreign countries, where they have no power or jurisdiction. It follows, from what has just been said, that it is necessary, in this place, to state by what authority and in what manner coins are made current at a certain rate or value, and become in that respect legal tender, particularly within these your Majesty's dominions."

"There is no doubt that the Sovereigns of most of the kingdoms and states of Europe, have enjoyed and exercised, from time immemorial, the right of declaring at what rate or value the coins of every denomination shall pass, and become in that respect, lawful coins or legal tender. In this your Majesty's kingdom, your Royal Predecessors have always enjoyed and exercised this right. Sir Matthew Hale reckons this right, (*inter jura majestatis*,) and, says, that it is an unquestionable prerogative of the Crown, and he treats with great ability of the nature and extent of this prerogative."

The deductions, to be made from these statements of his Lordship, can be carried much farther than may at first appear. Instead of proving that gold is the standard of value, they prove the very reverse; and, I think, and I repeat it with pride and exultation, they may be referred to as most complete evidence of the correctness of the theory, which I have been endeavouring to establish. For, if gold, in bullion or in coins, was the standard of value, how could it be possible for a Sovereign to alter or change that standard? and is not the statement, that the gold and silver coins circulate according to *rates fixed by the Sovereign*, a complete proof that these coins may be "measures of value," but that they are not the standard by which that value is determined, and that there exists another standard or mode of ascertaining that value? And has not his Lordship told us what that was? Has he not expressly declared, that the *pound* sterling is the *integer* which these coins were issued to represent; and that the rates or proportions of that integer, which they represented, were fixed by the government, and continued always fixed as long as they remained coins!

Now, what is the theory which I have been endeavouring to establish? It is, that value in exchange, being merely an adventitious quality attached to matter, in consequence of the introduction of barter amongst mankind, and, being perfectly arbitrary, no certain fixed mode of ascertaining it is to be found in nature; and, therefore, mankind have been under the necessity of inventing one. As all value is comparative, they have in every country assumed a point of comparison; to represent which, coins of gold, silver, and copper,

have been employed. When issued by the government of a country, these have been always ordered to pass for certain proportions of the point of comparison used in that country, and which they continue to do as long as they pass as coins in that country, without any reference whatever to the bullion-price of the metals of which they are composed.

I do not presume to say, that this Theory is to be found in his Lordship's work, to its full extent; but I do think, that, if he had been granted longer life, and better health, to have enabled him to have continued his inquiries and researches, it is probable, that he would have been led to make the same conclusions: and that it is still more probable, that, if he had lived to the present day, he would have supported this Theory, in opposition to that of the Bullion-Committee.

I think that your Lordship and Mr. W. Pole will be still less borne out in your assertion, by the Acts of Parliament to which you have referred. The first of these, that of the 14th of the present reign, was, upon a former occasion, in consequence of its having been brought forward by the Committee, in support of the very same doctrine, discussed by me at considerable length, in an Address to the Editors of the Edinburgh Review. But, as your Lordship has been pleased again to bring it into notice, and the Act itself is very short, I have thought proper to give it in an Appendix, that the public may judge whether, even by *implication*, it goes to establish gold as the standard of value.[1] A perusal of it will shew what I formerly remarked, that the term gold is not to be found in it from beginning to end. At the same time, I am ready to allow that from its tenor, it may be implied that gold *coin* is a legal tender for any amount, either above or below 25*l.*; or, if your Lordship please, for all sums above 25*l.*; but, surely, this does not go to *imply*, that gold coin, far less gold bullion, is the standard of value. If such reasoning were to be allowed, then I would argue that bank-notes had a much better title to be declared the standard of value, because gold coins, by this Act, are only *implied* to be a legal tender, whereas bank-notes have been, by another Act, since positively declared to be a legal tender. I have, also, given, in the Appendix, the Acts of the 38th and 39th of this reign, which merely go to estab-

[1] The title of this Act, and the Act itself, appear to be at variance. The title is, "an Act to prohibit the importation of light silver coin of this realm, from foreign countries, into Great Britain or Ireland, and to restrain the tender *thereof* beyond a certain sum." From this is certainly to be inferred, that it is only the tender of light silver coin from foreign parts, that is to be restrained. But the Act itself appears to attach to all silver coin, and it has always been so translated; although, in that mode, the second clause of the Act has no connexion with the first.

lishing the former Act to be perpetual. So far from these Acts proving that gold is the standard of value, it appears to me that they prove, very strongly, my Theory; for, what else can be meant by directing that these silver coins shall be taken only by weight, at the *rate of 5s. 2d. per oz.* than that they shall not pass as coins, but be taken as bullion, at a certain price, or certain fixed proportion of the pound, that is, of the integer or point of comparison. This remark may, indeed, be extended to all Statutes, Acts of Parliament, or Proclamations of the King, passed in this country, respecting coins, for in every one of them, without exception, the coins, whether gold or silver, are invariably directed to pass for or to represent certain parts or proportions of the pound sterling, the integer or point of comparison.

Having thus, I trust, shewn, that the evidence quoted by your Lordship does not go to prove, that gold bullion is the standard of value in this country, I have now to state the fatal consequences that would attend the assuming such a principle to found a new coinage upon. If your Lordship adopts the *data* of the Bullion Committee, you must also adopt their conclusions; for, there is no doubt, if their principles be sound, their deductions are correct. If gold be the standard of value, an ounce of gold must always be of the same value; and, whenever a bank-note cannot purchase the same quantity of gold or exchange for the same quantity of gold it used to do, that note must be depreciated; this is without doubt. Your Lordship must, therefore, acknowledge, that Bank of England notes not only have been, but may again be, depreciated. You must also acquiesce in the assertion, that the low rate of foreign exchanges and the nominal high value of gold (for, if gold be the standard of value, no alteration can *really* take place in its value) have been entirely owing to the depreciation of bank-notes, in consequence of an over issue; however contrary to fact such an assertion may be, and that it is contrary to fact will evidently appear from a cursory examination of the table given in the Appendix, where the quantity of bank-notes in circulation may be compared with the price of gold bullion and the rate of exchange with France for the last two years. You must also support the doctrine, that the present rates at the mint have been established by law, and cannot be altered without "a breach of public faith and dereliction "of a primary duty on the part of government." So that, whenever a new coinage is made, whatever the price of gold and silver bullion may be in the market, the gold and silver coins must continue to be of the old weight, and be issued at the old rates.

Your Lordship has given a very decided proof of the determination of his Majesty's ministers to support these principles, as you are reported to have declared, that it would be proper and neces-

sary to continue the gold coins as they are, because *gold is the standard of value*; and, therefore, no alteration ought to be made on gold coins. The same declaration is reported to have been made in the other house,—and that, too, in the face of an extraordinary fact, which the gentleman himself stated and acknowledged. It was, that, during the present reign, above sixty millions of guineas had issued from the mint, of which, he said, God only knew what had become of what quantity remained within our shores. I think, the doubt might have been very easily solved; not above a twentieth part of that quantity will now be found in this country; the rest has been scattered over Europe, to the advantage of a few individuals and a great loss to the country. And, allow me to say, that, if government had it in their power to coin sixty millions more, if they were issued at the same rate, they would, in a very short time, go the same way. As this measure, however, does not appear to be intended to be carried into immediate execution, I shall not say any thing further upon it at present, but I may probably take an early opportunity of endeavouring to prove to your Lordship the impossibility of procuring the quantity of gold that would be required to make guineas again the circulating medium of the country, and the inability of the country to pay for it, even if it could be got.

One thing I beg leave to mention, it is, that gold is and has been for thirty years past about 7 per cent. higher in France than here; a most convincing proof of this is, that, at this very moment, although the exchange with us has been, for same time, rather above par, gold bullion, that can be exported, sells readily at 4*l.* per ounce, at which rate considerable quantities have been bought very lately, and exported. In this situation, if guineas were issued at the old rate, how long would they continue in the country?

The great object of present attention is the silver coinage, indeed that is what the country is most deeply interested in. It has been for nearly twenty years past almost completely without gold coin, and it could go on very well for twenty years more, or, perhaps, for ever without it. But a silver coinage it cannot want, and the inconvenience and distress the people, more especially in the distant parts, have for many years been labouring under, from the scarcity and badness of small change, can only be conceived by those who have seen and felt it. The advantages to be derived from a well-regulated silver and copper coinage, have, I am afraid, never been sufficiently appreciated. Late political writers have said a great deal upon the importance of the internal trade of a country, and the circulation of commodities within it. The benefits to be derived from that, are alleged to be much superior to those from foreign trade. Nothing can be of so much service or tend so much to the

increase of internal trade as the command of a circulating medium, adopted to carrying on the lesser interchanges of society. The great bulk of the internal trade of a country centres in retail, and whatever cramps the retail-trade must essentially hurt the other. The distress the lower orders of shop-keepers, the mechanics, and the labourers, have, for many years, suffered from want, not merely of *good* silver coins, but actually from want of coins of any kind, cannot easily be described; and, could a fair calculation be made of the loss occasioned thereby, it would amount to a sum almost surpassing belief. Ministers, therefore, could not possibly do a greater service to the country, more especially in the present state of distress and stagnation of all trade, than to give it a good silver coinage, provided that it is done upon a proper principle and issued in abundant quantity. These are the two points which I propose to take into consideration. On the first, I feel very considerable pleasure in having to congratulate your Lordship and your colleagues on the spirit with which, in spite of your adoption of the principles of the Bullion Committee, you have determined to break, at least in part, that spell which has so long bound the currency of this country, which has cramped its trade and industry, and diminished and hurt its finances and resources, —I mean, what is called the mint-rates, that is to say, the proportions of the integer of the country, at which the different coins are directed to pass, which rates have been, of late, so positively declared to be the inviolable law of the land, and no more to be touched or altered than Magna Charta, although the actual fact is that this *antient, established, invariable* standard (so happily ridiculed by Mr. Vansittart, in the quotation I have given) has actually been changed and altered, and that from motives of the most just policy, by every King or Queen that has sat upon the throne of these realms, except the present one; and a great part, if not the whole of the confusion our circulating medium has been thrown into has been owing to this very circumstance.

I am very much afraid, however, that you will not carry this reformation far enough: indeed, if Mr. W. Pole stated correctly what is intended to be done, to divide the pound of silver into 66 in place of 62, the alteration is too trivial to have any good consequence. As you are reported, however, to have talked of making it 68 or 70, I should hope that the rate is not yet positively determined on, and that you may be induced to make it still a greater proportion. The inconvenience attending the introduction of a new coinage is so great, independent of the expense, that it would be much better to prevent the risk of a repetition of it, by making the pieces rather too small than too large. That no evil results from having silver pieces passing at a higher rate than the value

of the silver contained in them, has been most completely exemplified in the local and the bank tokens, the latter of which are still freely circulating, although they were issued at the rate of 6*s.* 8*d.* per oz. and silver bullion is at present at 5*s.* 1½*d.*; and I think I may take it upon me to say, that no man ever put a farthing more upon the price of his goods in consequence of being paid in those.

Inconvenienced as the country has been for want of silver currency, it would have been infinitely worse, had it not had these bank tokens; and yet, if these had happened to have been issued when silver bullion was at 5*s.* 6*d.* or even 5. 9*d.* per oz. when it got to 6*s.* 8*d.* and 7*s.* not one of them would have remained in the country; they would have all flown, as the crowns and half-crowns have done. In like manner, should a change in the politics of Europe, or in the commercial relations of the country, again sink the exchanges, and raise the price of silver bullion, the new coinage, being of full weight and handsome impression, would immediately disappear, and leave the country even in a worse situation than it is at present. Besides, independent of these chances of a rise in the price of silver, I am decidedly of opinion, that it will not continue any time at the present low rate. I think the depression has been owing a good deal to what the French call re-action; it had got very high, and in consequence of a great demand here for it to send to the continent, it was poured into this country from all other quarters of the world. It is well known, that government had agents in different parts of South America, buying it up at very high rates. Very great quantities of it arrived here just as the demand for the continent ceased, and as it has been accumulating since, no wonder that it has been depressed and the price fallen. But this will very soon correct itself, or rather be corrected, by a demand from the continent again commencing, and Europe must either in future be content with less than one half of the silver it used formerly to consume, or the price of silver must get up very considerably, for the Spanish mines, from whence almost the whole comes, have not, for some years past, produced one half what they did twenty years ago. On this account, I take the liberty of recommending, in the most earnest manner, that the coinage be made at the rate of 80*s.* to the pound of silver. This, with a handsome impression, would give it a chance of remaining in the country, and being of real service, provided it be issued in sufficient abundance. For, if an abundant supply is not given, the measure will do harm instead of good; and I have no hesitation in stating it to be my most decided opinion, that the amount proposed to be issued is perfectly inadequate, and will only create more distress and confusion in the country. I do not presume, my Lord,

to give this opinion upon light grounds, or without having duly considered the subject; I trust I shall be able to give convincing proofs of the contrary.

Your Lordship is reported to have stated, that the bank tokens amounted in value to 3,700,000, and to have asked whether they did not more frequently appear than any other coin. To this question I would reply—*Yes, in London and its environs, that is to say for fifty or sixty miles round it*; but, beyond that, scarce such a thing as a bank token is to be seen, and, of the few that are to be met with, the greater part are counterfeits. At York, Newcastle, Carlisle, Lancaster, Liverpool, Bristol, Exeter, &c. the circulation is almost wholly carried on by Birmingham and Irish counters, intermixed with a few mint shillings and local tokens, for in many places, necessity has obliged the people to keep these last in circulation, in spite of the Act of Parliament. In Scotland it is the same; there indeed they have been chiefly supplied from Ireland. I therefore conceive myself perfectly justified, and within bounds, when I estimate the circulating value of all these shillings and sixpences at rather more than the bank tokens, I will say four millions; and I think the value of the counterfeit tokens cannot be taken at less than 300,000*l.*; indeed, I have reason to believe it is considerably more.[1] The present silver currency of the country then stands thus:

In genuine bank-tokens	£3,700,000
Counterfeit ditto	300,000
Other coins of all descriptions	4,000,000
	£8,000,000

And with this amount the country feels a want of circulating medium. What then is the remedy proposed? To withdraw from circulation—

The bank-dollars, valued at	£1,000,000
And the whole of the present shillings and sixpences, &c.	4,000,000
In all	£5,000,000

[1] When the bank dollars were first issued, a great deal was said on the impossibility of counterfeiting them, in consequence of the immense power that was required to stamp them. To my own knowledge counterfeits of these dollars were attempted to be passed in Scotland before a genuine one had been seen there.

And to give in return—

36 millions of shillings, making	£1,800,000
25 ditto of sixpences, making	625,000
	£2,425,000

If this measure, therefore, be adopted, the country will be in a worse situation than it is at present, and the consequence will be that, after labouring under the utmost inconvenience and distress for a few weeks, the people will find themselves under the absolute necessity of again using the old pieces. A few of the best only will at first be taken, but, by degrees, that number will increase, and will continue to do so until, in a few months or years at farthest, they again get into full circulation, and the new coins will have totally disappeared.

This was the case in the reign of King William, when a much greater quantity of coins were issued from the mint, and it has been the case with every partial silver coinage since.

Although the advantages to be derived from a new silver currency will be very great, yet the introducing it is, like the administering a powerful remedy, too violent in its effects to admit its being often resorted to. Once in a century is sufficient for such a measure. Government ought, therefore, to be particularly cautious how they tamper with it, especially in the present distressed state of the country. If I may be allowed to continue the metaphor, I would say, that they ought either to administer such a dose as will effectually and radically cure the evil or not interfere with it at all. To accomplish this properly would require silver coins to the nominal value of at least 10,000,000*l.* A coinage to that amount would not only enable the public at once to drive out of circulation every piece, without exception, at present in use, but with the assistance of a small annual supply, to keep them in future completely out; and unless that can be done no benefit whatever will accrue from the measure; on the contrary, accumulated inconvenience and distress will be the result. If this coinage be made at the rate I have previously presumed to recommend, say eighty shillings to the pound of silver, it would have a great chance of remaining in the country, and that no inconvenience would result from its being issued and circulated at that rate, is sufficiently proved by the local and bank tokens, and indeed by the whole of the currency now in circulation.

Of the legality of the measure your Lordship appears to be perfectly convinced. I shall, therefore, add only one other inducement, which is, that, by adopting this mode, instead of having to apply to Parliament for funds to defray the expenses, there will be

a very considerable surplus, which may be appropriated to the exigencies of the state. Should silver bullion continue at the present low rate, this surplus would amount to a very large sum; but I think it is more than probable that, before the necessary quantity can be procured, the price will be considerably enhanced, although not so much as to prevent a handsome surplus remaining. Now, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer has found, and may again find, a little difficulty in making up his ways and means, it would be very agreeable to have a million, or a million and a half, at his disposal, more especially if acquired by a measure which would be of the greatest general benefit, and I do not hesitate to say, would give general satisfaction.

All that I have said is entirely applicable to Great Britain, but the measure will not be complete unless it is extended to Ireland; and there does not appear to be any good reason why it should not; indeed, that country has actually suffered more, and stands more in need of a proper currency, than this; but its sufferings have generally been in a different way, instead of a want of currency it has been overwhelmed with it. I do not know to what cause to attribute it, except it be impunity, but the Irish coiners have always wrought much harder, and produced more than the English ones.

I was in Dublin, in 1804, when a sudden check was given to the circulation of counterfeit shillings; at that time the quantity in circulation in that town was prodigious; it was estimated at a million to a million and a half sterling. The distress was dreadful; many of the middling and lower orders of shopkeepers and tradespeople were completely ruined, and they would have starved for want of a circulating medium, had not the coiners most ingeniously supplied them with coppers, made of lead, run into a mould, and bronzed over, which passed currently in rouleaus of thirteen-pence each.

To supply Ireland with a sufficient silver coinage, will require coin to the value of at least two millions, perhaps three; but I have at present no *data* to enable me to say positively. Whether these should be a separate and different coinage as formerly, or the same as that for this country, depends, in my opinion, entirely upon the mode in which the late step of consolidating the Exchequers of the two countries is to be acted upon. If, by that measure, it is intended, that in future all the taxes collected in Ireland are to be paid indiscriminately into the English Exchequer, and all her expenses and debts, including interest of her debts, to be paid out of that Exchequer, without any reference to their amount; then assuredly the same coins should pass and circulate in both countries indiscriminately, they being now completely consolidated together.

But if, on the contrary, Ireland is still to be liable for her own expenses and debt, and be obliged to continue borrowing in this country to pay her deficiencies, and have the interest of that debt to provide for, then a separate and distinct coinage will still be found to be essentially necessary.

Thus, my Lord, have I endeavoured to deliver my sentiments on this subject. Whatever opinion may be formed of these sentiments, I hope and trust, that my motives for making them public will be duly appreciated, that they proceed from an anxious wish to serve my country in general, and not any party in it, and that it is measures, not men, that I have presumed to attack. I also hope that the unavoidable haste in which this has been brought forward will be accepted as an excuse for any inaccuracies that may be found in it. I remain, with the most profound respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient

And most devoted humble Servant,

THOMAS SMITH.

27, *Little St. Thomas Apostle.*
6th June, 1816.

Appendix.

An Act to prohibit the importation of light Silver Coin, of this Realm, from Foreign Countries, into *Great Britain* or *Ireland*; and to restrain the Tender thereof beyond a certain sum.—Cap. XLII. Anno decimo quarto, Geo. III.

Whereas considerable quantities of old silver coin of this realm, or coin purporting to be such, greatly below the standard of the mint in weight, have been lately imported into this kingdom, and it is expedient that some provision should now be made to prevent a practice which may be carried on at this time, to the very great detriment of the public; be it therefore enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, that from and after the first day of June, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, all silver

coin of this realm, or any money purporting to be the silver coin of this realm, which is not of the established standard of the mint in weight and fineness, shall be prohibited to be imported or brought into the kingdoms of Great Britain or Ireland from foreign countries; and if any silver coin being, or purporting to be, the coin of this realm, exceeding in amount the sum of five pounds, shall be found, by any Officer of his Majesty's Customs, on board any ship or vessel, in any port, harbour, haven, or creek, or in any boat, barge, or other vessel, upon the water, within the said kingdoms, or in the custody of any person coming directly from the waterside, or upon the information of one or more person or persons in any house, shop, cellar, warehouse, room, or other place, on a search there made in such manner as in and by an Act made in the fourteenth year of the Reign of the late King Charles the second, intituled, *An Act for preventing frauds, and regulating abuses, in His Majesty's customs*, is mentioned and directed, if such search is made in Great Britain, or according to the manner directed by an Act of Parliament made in Ireland, relative to the searching for uncustomed and prohibited goods in that kingdom, if such search is made there, it shall and may be lawful for such Officer to stop and put such coin in His Majesty's Customhouse Warehouse, in the Port next to the place where such stop shall be made: and if it shall appear, upon examination there, to the collector, or other principal Officer of the Customs, of the said port or place, that such silver coin is of the established standard of the mint in weight and fineness, the same shall, upon demand, be forthwith delivered to the owner or proprietor thereof without fee or reward; and such Officer or Officers, or any person or persons acting in his or their aid or assistance, shall not be liable to any action, suit, or prosecution, for searching, stopping, or detaining the same; but if such coin, or any part thereof, shall be less in weight than the established standard of the mint, that is to say, at and after the rate of sixty-two shillings to every pound troy, whether the same be in crowns, half crowns, shillings, sixpences, or pieces of a lower denomination, or of less fineness than eleven ounces two penny weights of fine silver, and eighteen penny weights of alloy in the pound troy, the same, or such part thereof as shall be deficient either in weight or fineness, as aforesaid, shall be forfeited, and shall and may be seized by any Officer of the Customs, and prosecuted in any Court of Record in Westminster or Dublin, or in the Court of Exchequer at Edinburgh; or if such coin shall not amount in value to the sum of twenty pounds, in that case the same shall and may be prosecuted in a summary way, before any two of His Majesty's Justices of the peace for the county, city, or place, where such seizure shall be made, at the election of the Commissioners of His Majesty's Cus-

toms in Great Britain, or the commissioners of revenue in Ireland, or any three or more of them respectively, in such and the like manner, and by the same rules and regulations as any forfeiture incurred by any law of the revenue may be sued for and recovered, in the kingdom of Great Britain or Ireland respectively; and after condemnation, the same shall be melted down, cut, or otherwise defaced, in such manner as the said commissioners of His Majesty's Customs and revenue respectively shall direct; and one moiety of the produce arising by the sale thereof, after being so melted down, cut, or defaced, (first deducting the charges of prosecution and sale,) shall be to the use of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and the other moiety to such Officer of the Customs as shall sue and prosecute for the same.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that no tender in the payment of money made in the silver coin of this realm of any sum exceeding the sum of twenty-five pounds, at any one time, shall be reputed in law, or allowed to be a legal tender within Great Britain or Ireland, for more than according to its value by weight, after the rate of five shillings and two-pence for each ounce of silver; and no person to whom such tender shall be made shall be any ways bound thereby, or obliged to receive the same in payment, in any other manner than as aforesaid; any law, statute, or usage, to the contrary notwithstanding.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that this act shall continue in force until the first day of May, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six, and from thence to the end of the then next session of parliament.

24th June, 1798.

An Act to revive and continue, until the First Day of January, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine, an Act, passed in the Fourteenth Year of the Reign of His present Majesty, Chapter Forty-two, viz. on the Thirteenth Day of January, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, intituled, *An Act to prohibit the Importation of Light Silver Coin, of this Realm, from Foreign Countries, into* Great Britain *or* Ireland; *and to restrain the Tender thereof beyond a certain Sum;* and to suspend the Coining of silver. Cap. LIX. Anno tricesimo octavo, Geo. III.

Whereas an Act was passed in the fourteenth year of His present Majesty's reign, intituled, *An Act to prohibit the importation of Light Silver Coin, of this Realm, from Foreign Countries, into*

Great Britain *or* Ireland; *and to restrain the Tender thereof beyond a certain sum*, which Act was to continue in Force for a limited time and is now expired; And whereas it is proper, under the present circumstances, that the said Act should be revived and further continued; be it therefore enacted, by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That, from and after the passing of this Act, the said Act, and all the provisions thereof, shall be, and the same is hereby revived, and shall continue and be in force until the first day of June, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine.

II. And whereas His Majesty has appointed a committee of His Privy Council to take into consideration the state of the coins of this kingdom, and the present establishment and constitution of His Majesty's mint, and inconvenience may arise from any mixture of silver, until such regulations may be framed as shall appear necessary: And whereas, from the present low price of silver bullion, owing to temporary circumstances, a small quantity of silver bullion has been brought to the mint to be coined, and there is reason to suppose that a still further quantity may be brought, and it is therefore necessary to suspend the coining of silver for the present; be it therefore enacted, That, from and after the passing of this Act, no silver bullion shall be coined at the mint, nor shall any silver coin that may have been coined there be delivered; any law to the contrary in anywise notwithstanding.

III. And be it further enacted, That all persons who delivered silver at the mint, for the purpose of the same being coined, previous to the ninth day of May, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight, shall be entitled to receive from the officer of His Majesty's mint, such a sum for each pound weight thereof, as shall be equal to the full value of the coin into which the bullion would have been converted, if the same had been coined according to the regulations of the mint.

IV. And be it further enacted, That this Act may be altered, amended, or repealed, during the present Session of Parliament.

12th July, 1799.

An Act for reviving and making perpetual an Act made in the Fourteenth Year of the Reign of His present Majesty, intituled, *An Act to prohibit the Importation of Light Silver Coin of this Realm from Foreign Countries into* Great Britain *or* Ireland; *and to restrain the Tender thereof beyond a certain Sum.*—Cap. LXXV. Anno tricesimo nono, Geo. III.

Whereas an act was passed in the fourteenth year of His present Majesty's reign intituled, *An Act to prohibit the importation of light silver coin of this realm from foreign countries into* Great Britain *or* Ireland; *and to restrain the Tender thereof beyond a certain sum;* which Act was to continue in force until the first day of May, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-six, and from thence to the end of the then next Session of Parliament, which said Act was, by an Act passed in the last Session of Parliament, revived, amended, and further continued until the first day of June, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine; And whereas it is expedient that the said first-mentioned Act should be revived and made perpetual, be it therefore enacted, by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that, from and after the first day of June, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine, the said Act and all the provisions thereof shall be, and the same is hereby revived, and shall be perpetual.

It is conceived, that the following Table will most completely prove, that the price of gold bullion, and the rate of foreign exchanges, are not in the smallest degree affected by the issue of Bank of England notes.

A TABLE

Of the average amount of Bank of England Notes in circulation in each month of the years 1814 and 1815, and of the price of gold bullion and doubloons, and of the rate of exchange with Paris, for the same periods.

		Average Amount of Bank Notes in Circulation.	Price of Gold Bullion.			Price of Doubloons.			Exchange with Paris.	
		£	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	f.	c.
1814.	January	25,538,732	5	8	0	5	10	0		
	February	24,916,545	5	8	0	5	10	0	21	20
	March	24,922,642	5	5	0	5	10	0		
	April	25,868,006	5	5	0	5	10	0	19	50
	May	25,603,997	5	3	0	4	18	0		
	June	26,119,950	4	12	0	4	10	0	21	
	July	28,760,298	4	11	6	4	5	0		
	August	28,417,795	4	4	0	4	5	0	23	
	September	28,211,497	4	6	0	4	3	6		
	October	28,364,482	4	6	0	4	4	6		
	November	27,917,810	4	8	6	4	8	0	22	
	December	27,613,410	4	6	6	4	5	0	22	50
1815.	January	27,837,182	4	6	6	4	4	6		
	February	27,366,385	4	9	0	4	6	0	22	20
	March	26,691,345	4	9	0	4	5	6	20	
	April	27,499,952	5	7	0	5	2	0		
	May	26,975,862	5	6	0	5	1	0	19	
	June	26,507,975	5	5	0	4	19	6	20	
	July	27,430,186	4	11	0	4	6	0	21	
	August	27,134,000	4	9	0	4	4	0	22	20
	September	26,942,652	4	8	0	4	3	0	22	50
	October	26,753,477	4	3	0	3	19	0	23	
	November	26,207,515	4	3	0	3	19	0	23	50
	December	25,425,152	4	2	0	3	17	0	24	20

GENERAL REPORT

OF

SCOTLAND.

Statistical Tables;

OR,

RESULT OF THE INQUIRIES

REGARDING THE

GEOGRAPHICAL, AGRICULTURAL, AND POLITICAL

STATE OF SCOTLAND.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON.

1817.

GENERAL REPORT, &c.

1. EXTENT.

	Square miles. Land.	Fresh-water lakes.	Totals.
1. Main land of Scotland,	25,520	494	26,014
2. Hebrides, - -	2,800	104	2,904
3. Orkney Islands, -	425	15	440
4. Zetland Isles, - -	855	25	880
	29,600	638	30,238

2. CLIMATE.

East Coast.

	Days.
1. Average number of days of rain and snow,	135
2. Fair weather, - - - - - -	230
	365

West Coast.

	Days.
1. Average number of days of rain and snow, -	205
2. Fair weather, - - - - - -	160
	365

Difference of fair weather in favour of the east coast, 70

3. WINDS.

East Coast.

	Days.
1. From the north,	25
2. North-east,	29
3. East,	62
4. South-east,	14
5. South,	9
6. South-west,	105
7. West,	102
8. North-west,	19
	365

West Coast.

	Days.
1. Points from east to west by north,	197
2. From west to south,	139
3. From south to east,	29
	365

4. THE MOST CELEBRATED MOUNTAINS IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING COUNTIES, AND THEIR HEIGHT ABOVE THE LEVEL OF THE SEA.

	Feet.
1. Benevis, (Inverness-shire, the highest in Scotland),	4370
2. Benmacdounie, (Aberdeenshire),	4300
3. Cairngorum, (Banffshire),	4060
4. Benlawers, (Perthshire),	3787
5. Benwyvis, (Ross-shire),	3720
6. Cruachan, (Argyleshire),	3390
7. Lowthers, Lanarkshire, (the highest inhabited place in Scotland),	1564

5. PRINCIPAL RIVERS, AND THE EXTENT OF TERRITORY FROM WHICH THEY DERIVE THEIR WATERS.

	Square miles.
1. Tay,	2396
2. Tweed,	1870

	Square miles.
3. Spey,	1300
4. Clyde,	1200
5. North Dee,	900
6. Ness,	850
7. Forth,	840
8. Lochy,	530
9. Nith,	504
10. Findhorn,	500

6. CELEBRATED LAKES, AND THE SIZE OF EACH.

	Square miles of surface.
1. Loch Lomond, (Dunbarton and Stirling)	45
2. Loch Awe, (Argyle),	30
3. Loch Ness, (Inverness),	30
4. Loch Shin, (Sutherland),	25
5. Loch Mari, (Ross),	24
6. Loch Tay, (Perth),	20
7. Loch Arkieg, (Inverness),	18
8. Loch Shiel, (Inverness),	16
9. Loch Lochy, (Inverness),	15
10. Loch Laggan, (Inverness),	12

7. STATE OF PROPERTY.

	Number of Proprietors.
1. Large properties, or estates above 2000*l.* of valued rent, or 2500*l.* sterling of real rent,	396
2. Middling properties, or estates from 2000*l.* to 500*l.* of valued rent, or from 2500*l.* to 625*l.* of real rent,	1077
3. Small properties, or estates under 500*l.* of valued rent, or 625*l.* of real rent,	6181
4. Estates belonging to corporate bodies,	144
Total number of proprietors in Scotland,	7798

8. PROPORTION OF SOIL CULTIVATED AND UNCULTIVATED.

	English acres.
1. Number of acres fully or partially cultivated,	5,043,050
2. Acres uncultivated, including woods and plantations, - - - -	13,900,550
Total extent of Scotland in English acres,	18,943,600

9. EXTENT OF WOODS AND PLANTATIONS.

	English acres.
1. Extent of plantations, - - - -	412,226
2. ——— natural woods, - - - -	501,469
Total,	913,695

10. NATURE OF THE PRODUCTIVE SOILS IN SCOTLAND.

1. Sandy soils, - - - -	263,771
2. Gravel, - - - - -	621,862
3. Improved mossy soils, - - - -	411,092
4. Cold or inferior clays, - - -	510,265
5. Rich clays, - - - -	987,070
6 Loams, - - - - -	1,869,193
7. Alluvial, haugh, or carse land, - -	320,193
	5,043,450

11. NUMBER OF ACRES IN ONE YEAR, UNDER THE DIFFERENT CROPS, OR IN FALLOW.

	Acres.
1. Grass, (in hay and pasture), - -	2,499,725
2. Wheat, - - - -	140,095
3. Barley, - - - -	280,193
4. Oats, - - - - -	1,260,362
5. Rye, - - - -	509
6. Beans and peas, - - - -	118,000
7. Potatoes, - - - -	80,000
Carry forward,	4,368,875

		Acres.
	Brought forward,	4,368,875
8. Turnips,	- - - -	407,125
9. Flax,	- - - - -	16,500
10. Fallow,	- - - - -	218,950
11. Gardens and orchards,	- - -	32,000
		5,043,450

12. VALUE OF CROPS.

	Acres.		Per acre.	Amount.
1. Grass lands,	2,489,725	at	2*l.*	4,979,450*l.*
2. Wheat, -	140,095	at	11,	1,541,045
3. Barley, -	280,193	at	8,	2,241,544
4. Oats, -	1,260,362	at	7,	8,822,534
5. Rye, -	500	at	6,	3,000
6. Beans and peas,	118,000	at	6,	708,000
7. Potatoes, -	80,000	at	8,	640,000
8. Turnips, -	407,125	at	4,	1,628,500
9. Flax, -	16,500	at	8,	132,000
10. Gardens, -	32,000	at	15,	480,000
Productive acres,	4,824,500	Produce,		21,176,073*l.*
Fallow,	218,950			

Total cultivated, 5,043,450; average *per* acre, (including fallow), 4*l.* 4*s.* nearly.

Uncultivated 13,900,550, including wood lands, 3*s.* *per* acre, 2,085,082 10 0

Total land produce, 23,261,155 10 0*l.*

13. LIVE-STOCK, AND THEIR PRODUCE.

1. Horses, 243,489, value of their work when full grown, or increase in their work while young, yearly, at 10*l.* each, - - - - 2,434,890*l.*
2. Cattle, 1,047,142, annual value of dairy produce, and annual increase in the worth of the feeding cattle, at 6*l.* each, - 6,282,852
3. Sheep, 2,850,867, - - - 1,425,983

Carry forward, 10,143,725*l.*

Brought forward,	10,143,725*l.*
4. Hogs, 500,000, produce 30*s.* each, -	750,000
5. Lesser stock, (poultry, &c.) - -	250,000
Total produce of live stock, - -	11,143,725*l.*

This sum is included in the general estimate of land produce already given.

14. MINERAL STATE.

Coal.

	Acres.
1. Extent of the great coal-field of Scotland,	600,000
2. Annual consumption, - - -	172
3. Quantity annually consumed in tons, -	2,500,000
4. Value of the coal annually consumed, at an average of 6*s.* 8*d.* *per* ton, -	833,333*l.* 6*s.* 0*d.*
5. Expence of labour 5*s.* 10*d.* *per* ton,	729,166 10 0
6. Rent to the proprietor, 10*d.* *per* ditto,	104,060 10 0

Lime.

	Boll.
1. Quantity of lime annually manufactured in Scotland, - -	3,000,000
2. Quantity in Winchester bushels, at 4 bushels *per* boll, -	12,000,000
3. Value at 2*s.* 6*d.* *per* boll, -	375,000*l.*
4. Extent of land annually dressed with lime,	Acres. 100,000

Iron.

1. Number of blast furnaces, - -	21
2. Quantity annually produced, - -	32,760
3. Value at 7*l.* *per* ton, - - -	229,320*l.*
4. Number of persons annually employed, -	7,650

Lead.

1. Number of bars of lead annually produced, -	65,000
2. Annual value at 2*l.* *per* bar, - -	130,000*l.*

Value of Mineral Productions.

1. Coal,	833,333*l.*
2. Lime,	375,000
3. Iron,	229,320
4. Lead,	130,000
5. Various articles,	30,000
	1,597,653*l.*

15. FISHERIES.

1. Salmon and fresh-water fisheries,	150,000*l.*
2. The white-sea fishery,	400,000
3. The herring fishery,	500,000
4. The whale fishery,	200,000
5. Shell fish,	50,000
	1,300,000*l.*

16. AMOUNT OF TERRITORIAL PRODUCTIONS.

1. Gross produce of land,	23,261,155*l.*	10*s.*	0*d.*
2. Minerals,	1,597,653	0	0
3. Fisheries,	1,300,000	0	0
	26,158,808*l.*	10*s.*	0*d.*
4. The rents of lands, mines, fisheries, kelp, &c. for one year ending 5th April, 1813,	5,041,779	11	11
5. Amount of produce absorbed by the expence of cultivation, and the profit of farmers, gardeners, and other dealers in the productions of the soil, also by colliers, fishermen, &c.	21,117,028*l.*	18*s.*	1*d.*

17. MANUFACTURES OF SCOTLAND.

	Value of raw material.	Total value of manufactured articles.	Expence of labour and profit.
1. Woollen. -	300,000	450,000	150,000
2. Linen, -	834,149	1,775,000	940,851
3. Cotton, -	1,832,124	6,964,486	5,132,362
4. Inferior branches,	1,300,000	5,000,000	3,700,000
	4,266,273	14,189,486	9,923,213

18. COMMERCE.

1. Number of ships belonging to Scotland, -	2,708
2. Tonnage, - - - - -	231,273
3. Number of seamen, - - - -	16,300
4. Exports, - - - -	4,740,239*l.*
5. Imports, - - - - -	3,671,158
6. Balance in favour of Scotland, - -	1,069,081

19. THE POOR.

1. Number of parochial poor, - - -	36,000
Average allowance to each, - -	3*l.*
Total expence, -	108,000*l.*
Average expence of maintaining the poor in workhouses, - - -	8*l.* 10*s.*

20. POPULATION.

	Year.	Number.	Increase.
1. Population,	1755	1,265,380	
2. Ditto,	1799	1,526,492	261,112
3. Ditto,	1801	1,599,068	72,576
4. Ditto,	1811	1,804,864	205,796

The average population of Scotland is at the rate of 60 persons *per* square mile.

21. PEERAGE OF SCOTLAND.

1. Number of Peers at the Union, - -		154
2. The Duke of Rothesay when entitled to vote, -		1
3. Claims admitted by the House of Peers after the Union,		4
		159
4. Extinct, - - - - -	41	
5. Merged in, or united to, other titles, -	10	
6 Forfeited, - - - - -	26	
	—	77
Remained,		82

22. STATE OF THE PEERAGE AT THE LAST ELECTION.

1. Peers, who voted, - - - -		52
2. Minors, - - - - -	3	
3. Peeresses, - - - - -	3	
4. Roman Catholics, - - - -	2	
Total disqualified,	8	
5. Out of the kingdom, or who declined voting,	22	
	—	30
Total Peers,		82

23. REPRESENTATION OF THE LANDED INTEREST.

1. Number of representatives, - - -	30
2. Number of freeholders in the 33 Scotch counties,	2,429
3. Number of landholders entitled to vote, if the whole valued rent of the kingdom were held by persons, each possessing 400*l.* Scotch of valued rent, - - - -	9,511

24. BOROUGH REPRESENTATION.

1. Number of representatives, - -	15
2. Number of boroughs, - - -	65
3. Population of ditto, - - -	471,417

25. ECCLESIASTICAL STATE OF SCOTAAND.

1. Number of synods,[1] - - -	16
2. Number of presbyteries, - - -	78
3. Number of parishes, - - - -	893
4. Number of established clergymen, - -	938

26. RELIGIOUS PERSUASIONS.

1. Established Presbyterian Church, -		1,408,388
2. Seceders from the Established Church of various descriptions, but all holding presbyterian principles, - - -		256,000
Total Presbyterians,		1,664,388
3. Separatists of various persuasions, as Baptists, Bereans, Glassites, -	50,000	
4. Roman Catholics, - -	50,000	
5. Scotch Episcopalians, -	28,000	
6. Methodists, - - -	9,000	
7. Church of England, - -	4,000	
8. Quakers, - - -	300	
		141,300
		1,805,688

27. REVENUE OF SCOTLAND.

1. Revenue at the Union 1707, - -		110,694*l.*	
2. Additional taxes then imposed, - -		49,306	
Total revenue at the Union,		160,000*l.*	
3. Revenue of Scotland, *anno* 1813,	4,843,229*l.*	12*s.*	11*d.*
4. Expence of management, drawbacks, &c. - - -	639,132	5	2
5. Net revenue of Scotland, -	4,204,097*l.*	7*s.*	9*d.*
6. Increase since the Union, -	4,044,097	7	9

[1] Including the presbytery of Zetland, which is invested with synodical powers.

28. PROPERTY TAX PAID BY SCOTLAND.

	On lands, mines, &c.			On houses.			Totals.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Gross rental on 5th April, 1811,	4,792,842	16	2	1,158,777	7	4	5,951,620	0	6
Ditto on 5th April, 1813,	5,061,779	11	11	1,243,609	9	3	6,285,389	1	2
				Increase in the years,			333,769	0	8

The reader will easily perceive, that in some of the above tables, it is only possible *to approximate to the truth;* and that in several other cases, there must be a perpetual fluctuation. But every exertion has been made, to render them as correct, as possible, and to give, within a moderate compass, a general view of the geographical, agricultural, and political circumstances of Scotland.

On the whole, it appears, that Scotland is a valuable and flourishing portion of the British Empire; and from the intelligence, skill, and industry of its inhabitants, it is daily increasing in prosperity and wealth.

THE PYRAMID
OF
Statistical Enquiry.

3

THE
General Report
OF
SCOTLAND.

2

THE COUNTY REPORTS
OF
SCOTLAND,
Containing 33 Districts.

1

THE
STATISTICAL ACCOUNT OF
SCOTLAND.
Containing 893 Parishes.

1. The Statistical account of Scotland, commenced in May, 1790, and was completed in 1798.

2. The Publication of the corrected county Reports, commenced in June 1795, and was completed in 1814.

3. The General Report of Scotland, commenced in 1811, and was completed in 1814.

To complete these several undertakings, required, in all, a period of about Twenty-four Years, and the assistance of above one Thousand Individuals.

LAUS DEO FINITUM.

EXPLANATION

OF THE

PYRAMID OF STATISTICAL INQUIRY,

BY SIR JOHN SINCLAIR.

THE object of the Pyramid is, to explain the nature of a new system, "*That of making extensive inquiries the basis of condensed information;*" by means of which, the information and talents of numbers of intelligent individuals, may be combined in the formation of one great work; and *useful knowledge*, the real source of national prosperity, may not only be rendered more complete, but, when ultimately brought within a moderate compass, may become more generally accessible.

The first practical illustration of that system, in its perfect state, is now given, in THE GENERAL REPORT OF SCOTLAND.

1. It was "*The Statistical Account of Scotland,*" a work which furnishes an accurate description *of every parochial district* in that part of the United Kingdom, amounting in all to 893, which laid the foundation of that laborious undertaking.

2. To procure detailed accounts of the agricultural state, and political circumstances, of the several "*counties or larger divisions,*" of which there are 33 in all, was the next step taken in the progress of the work.

3. But the great difficulty still remained, that of condensing, within a moderate compass, a mass of information, contained in fifty large volumes octavo, closely printed. That, however, is now happily accomplished in this General Report, which, though reduced to three volumes octavo, with two of Appendix, yet comprehends the substance of all the information collected in the former publications. With such a work to consult, a British

Statesman is enabled to form as just an idea of the general circumstances of Scotland, and the means of its improvement, as a proprietor usually acquires regarding his own private estate.—By adopting the same plan, in regard to England, Wales, and Ireland, what advantages might not accrue to those countries?

The practicability of carrying this system into effect being thus ascertained,—instead of its being restricted to agricultural or political topics, it ought to be extended to every other branch of useful knowledge. By minute inquiries, many valuable facts and observations might be collected, which would otherwise be lost; and by adopting the plan of condensation afterwards, more advantage would be derived from the information thus acquired, than could be obtained from undigested loads of literature.

IN ITS PRESENT STATE, KNOWLEDGE MAY BE COMPARED TO A SMALL PORTION OF GOLD, DISPERSED THROUGHOUT A GREAT QUANTITY OF ORE.—IN THAT RUDE CONDITION, THE STRONGEST MAN CANNOT BEAR ITS WEIGHT, NOR CAN ANY BENEFIT BE DERIVED FROM IT: BUT IF THE PURE METAL WERE SEPARATED FROM THE DROSS, EVEN A CHILD MIGHT CARRY IT WITHOUT DIFFICULTY, AND IT MAY BE USED WITH ADVANTAGE.

[illegible]

AN

ARGUMENT,

SHEWING THAT A

STANDING ARMY

IS INCONSISTENT WITH A FREE GOVERNMENT,

AND ABSOLUTELY DESTRUCTIVE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ENGLISH MONARCHY.

Cervus Equum pugna melior communibus herbis
Pellebat, donec minor in certamine longo
Imploravit opes hominis frænumque recepit.
Sed postquam victor violens discessit ab hoste,
Non Equitem dorso, non frænum depulit ore.

Horat. Epist. 10.

LONDON;

PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1697.

REPRINTED,

1817.

DEDICATION,

TO ALL THOSE WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Qui capit ille facit.

When I consider your great zeal to your country, how much you have exposed yourselves for its service, and how little you have improved your own fortunes, I think it is but justice to your merits to make your encomiums the preface to the following discourse. It is you that have abated the pride, and reduced the luxury of the Kingdom: you have been the physicians and divines of the commonwealth, by purging it of that dross and dung, which corrupts the minds and destroys the souls of men. You have convinced us that there is no safety in counsellors, nor trust to be put in ships under your conduct.

You have cleared the Seas, not of pirates, but of our own merchants, and by that means have made our prisons as so many store-houses to replenish your troops. In fine, to use the expression of the psalmist, your hearts are unsearchable for wisdom, and there is no finding out your understanding. *When I consider all this, and compare your merits with your preferments, how you came by them, and your behaviour in them, I cannot but think a standing army a collateral security to your title to them, and therefore must commend your policy*

in promoting it. For by these Kings reign, and Princes decree justice. *These will be our Magistrates, who will not bear the sword in vain. These, like the sons of Aaron, will wear their* Urim *and* Thummim *on their backs and breasts, and will be our priests, who will hew the sinners to pieces, as* Samuel *did* Agag *before the Lord in* Gilgal. *By these you will be able to teach us passive obedience, as men having authority, and not as the scribes. You will have your reasons in your hands against resisting the higher powers, and will prove your* Jus Divinum *by the sword of the Lord and of* Gideon.

Your honours' most obedient slave and vassal,

A. B. C. D. E. F. G.

AN ARGUMENT, &c.

WHEN I consider what a dismal scene of blood and desolation hath appeared upon the Theatre of *Europe* during the growth and progress of the *French* power, I cannot sufficiently applaud and admire our thrice happy situation, by which we have long enjoyed an uninterrupted course of peace and prosperity, whilst our neighbouring nations have been miserably harassed by perpetual war: for lying open to continual invasion, they can never enjoy quiet and security, nor take a sound sleep, but, *Hercules* like, with clubs in their hands: so that these halcyon days which we enjoy amidst such an universal hurricane, must be solely attributed to our tutelar God *Neptune*, who with a guard of winged coursers so strongly intrenches us, that we may be said to be *mediâ insuperabiles undâ*, and not unfitly compared to the Earth, which stands fixed and immoveable, and never to be shaken but by an internal convulsion. And as nature has been thus liberal to us in our situation, so the luxuriancy of our soil makes it productive of numerous commodities fit for trade and commerce: and as this trade renders us masters of the silver and gold of the East and West without our toiling in the Mine, so it breeds us multitudes of able-bodied and skilful seamen to defend the treasures they bring home, that even luxury itself, which has been the bane and destruction of most countries where it has been predominant, may in some measure be esteemed our preservation, by breeding up

a race of men amongst us, whose manner of life will never suffer them to be debauched, or enervated with ease or idleness. But we have one thing more to boast of, besides all these felicities, and that is, of being freemen and not slaves in this unhappy age, when an universal deluge of tyranny has overspread the face of the whole earth; so that this is the Ark, out of which if the dove be sent forth, she will find no resting place till her return.

Our constitution is a limited mixed Monarchy, where the King enjoys all the prerogatives necessary to the support of his dignity, and protection of his people, and is only abridged from the power of injuring his own subjects: in short, the man is loose and the beast only bound; and our government may truly be called, an Empire of laws, and not of men; for every man has the same right to what he can acquire by his labour and industry, as the King hath to his crown, and the meanest subject hath his remedy against him in his courts at *Westminster*: no man can be imprisoned, unless he has transgressed a law of his own making, nor be tryed but by his own neighbours; so that we enjoy a liberty scarce known to the ancient *Greeks* and *Romans*.

And lest the extraordinary power intrusted in the crown should lean towards arbitrary government, or the tumultuary licentiousness of the people should incline towards a democracy, the wisdom of our ancestors hath instituted a middle state, *viz.* of nobility, whose interest it is to trim this boat of our commonwealth, and to screen the people against the insults of the Prince, and the Prince against the popularity of the commons, since if either extreme prevail so far as to oppress the other, they are sure to be overwhelmed in their ruin. And the meeting of these three states in parliament is what we call our government: for, without all their consents no law can be made, nor a penny of money levied upon the subjects; so that the King's necessities do often oblige him

to summon this court, which is the grand inquest of the Kingdom, where the people speak boldly their grievances and call to account overgrown criminals, who are above the reach of ordinary justice: so that the excellence of this government consists in the due balance of the several constituent parts of it: for if either one of them should be too hard for the other two, there is an actual dissolution of the constitution; but whilst we can continue in our present condition, we may without vanity reckon ourselves the happiest people in the world.

But as there is no degree of human happiness but is accompanied with some defects, and the strongest constitutions are most liable to certain diseases; so the very excellence of our government betrays it to some inconveniences, the wheels and motions of it being so curious and delicate that it is often out of order, and therefore we ought to apply our utmost endeavours to rectify and preserve it: and I am afraid it is more owing to the accident of our situation, than to our own wisdom, integrity or courage, that it has yet a being; when we see most nations in *Europe* overrun with oppression and slavery, where the lives, estates and liberties of the people are subject to the lawless fancy and ambition of the prince, and the rapine and insolence of his officers; where the nobility, that were formerly the bold assertors of their country's liberty, are now only the ensigns and ornaments of the tyranny, and the people beasts of burden, and barely kept alive to support the luxury and prodigality of their masters.

And if we enquire how these unhappy nations have lost that precious jewel *Liberty*, and we as yet preserved it, we shall find their miseries and our happiness proceed from this, that their necessities or indiscretion have permitted a standing army to be kept amongst them, and our situation rather than our prudence, hath as yet defended us from it, otherwise we

had long since lost what is the most valuable thing under heaven: for, as I said before, our constitution depending upon a due balance between King, Lords and Commons, and that balance depending upon the mutual occasions and necessities they have of one another; if this cement be once broke, there is an actual dissolution of the government. Now this balance can never be preserved but by an union of the natural and artifical strength of the Kingdom, that is, by making the militia to consist of the same persons as have the property; or otherwise the government is violent and against nature, and cannot possibly continue, but the constitution must either break the army, or the army will destroy the constitution: for it is universally true, that wherever the militia is, there is or will be the government in a short time; and therefore, the institutors of this gothic balance (which was established in all parts of *Europe*) made the militia to consist of the same parts as the government, where the King was General, the Lords by virtue of their castles and honours, the great commanders, and the freeholders by their tenures the body of the army; so that it was next to impossible for an army thus constituted to act to the disadvantage of the constitution, unless we could suppose them to be felons *de se*. And here I will venture to assert that upon no other foundation than this, can any nation long preserve its freedom unless some very particular accidents contribute to it; and I hope I shall make it appear, that no nation ever preserved its liberty, that maintained an army otherwise constituted within the seat of their government: and, let us flatter ourselves as much as we please, what happened yesterday, will come to pass again; and the same causes will produce like effects in all ages.

And here I cannot avoid taking notice of some gentlemen who, a few years since, were the pretended patriots of their country, who had nothing in their mouths but the sacred

name of liberty, who in the late reigns could hardly afford the King the prerogative that was due to him, and which was absolutely necessary to put in motion this machine of our government, and to make the springs and wheels of it act naturally, and perform their function: I say, these gentlemen that could not with patience hear of the King's ordinary guards, can now discourse familiarly of twenty thousand men to be maintained in times of peace; and the odious excuse they give for this infamous apostacy is, that if they should not gratify the court in this modest request, another party may be caressed who will grant this, or any thing else which is asked and then they say matters will be much worse; as if arbitrary government was a different thing in their hands, from what it is in others, or that the lineaments and features of tyranny would become graceful and lovely when they are its *valets-de-chambre*. But let them not deceive themselves: for if they think to make their court this way, they will quickly find themselves out flattered by the party they fear, who have been long the darlings of arbitrary power and whose principles, as well as practices, teach them to be enemies to all the legal rights, and just liberties of their native country: and so these wretched bunglers will be made use of only to bring together the materials of tyranny, and then must give place to more expert architects to finish the building.

And though we are secure from any attempts of this kind during the reign of a prince who hath rescued us from a captivity equal to what *Moses* redeemed the people of *Israel* from: a prince whose life is so necessary to the preservation of *Europe*, that both protestant and popish princes have forgot their ancient maxims, and laid aside their innate animosities, and made it their common interest to chuse him their patron and protector: a prince in whom we know no vices but what have been esteemed virtues in others, *viz.* his undeserved clemency to his enemies, and his exposing too much that life upon which depends not only our safety, but the

liberties of all *Europe*, and the protestant religion through the world: I say, was this most excellent prince to be immortal (as his great and glorious actions) we ought in common prudence to abandon all thoughts of self-preservation, and wholly to rely on his care and conduct. But since no virtue nor pitch of glory will exempt him from paying the common debt to nature, but death hath a scythe which cuts off the most noble lives; we ought not to intrust any power with him, which we don't think proper to be continued to his successors: and doubtless our great benefactor will not regret this, or any thing else that can reasonably be demanded in order to compleat that deliverance so far advanced by his invincible courage and conduct; for, to set us like *Moses*, within view of the promised land, with a *ne plus ultra*, is the greatest of all human infelicities, and such I shall always take our case to be, whilst a standing army must be kept up to prey upon our entrails, and which must in the hands of an ill prince (which we have the misfortune frequently to meet with) infallibly destroy our constitution. And this is so evident and important a truth, that no legislator ever founded a free government, but avoided this *Charybdis*, as a rock against which his commonwealth must certainly be shipwrecked, as the *Israelites*, *Athenians*, *Corinthians*, *Achaians*, *Lacedæmonians*, *Thebans*, *Samnites*, and *Romans*, none of which nations, whilst they kept their liberty, were ever known to maintain any soldiers in constant pay within their cities, or ever suffered any of their subjects to make war their profession; well knowing that the sword and sovereignty always march hand in hand, and therefore they trained their own citizens and the territories about them perpetually in arms, and their whole commonwealths by this means became so many several formed militias: a general exercise of the best of their people in the use of arms, was the only bulwark of their liberties; this was reckoned the surest way to preserve them both at home and abroad, the people being secured

thereby, as well against the domestic affronts of any of their own citizens, as against the foreign invasions of ambitious and unruly neighbours. Their arms were never lodged in the hands of any who had not an interest in preserving the public peace, who fought *pro aris et focis*, and thought themselves sufficiently paid by repelling invaders, that they might with freedom return to their own affairs. In those days there was no difference between the citizen, the soldier and the husbandman; for all promiscuously took arms when the public safety required it, and afterwards laid them down with more alacrity than they took them up: so that we find amongst the *Romans* the best and bravest of their generals came from the plough, contentedly returning when the work was over, and never demanded their triumphs, till they had laid down their commands, and reduced themselves to the state of private men. Nor do we find that this famous commonwealth ever permitted a deposition of their arms in any other hands, till their empire increasing, necessity constrained them to erect a constant stipendiary soldiery abroad in foreign parts, either for the holding or winning of provinces: then luxury increasing with dominion, the strict rule and discipline of freedom soon abated, and forces were kept up at home, which soon proved of such dangerous consequence, that the people were forced to make a law to employ them at a convenient distance; which was, that if any general marched over the river *Rubicon*, he should be declared a public enemy: and in the passage of that river this following inscription was erected; *Imperator, sive miles, sive Tyrannus, armatus quisquis, sistito, vexillumque armaque deponito, nec citra hunc amnem trajicito*: and this made *Cæsar*, when he had presumed to pass this river, to think of nothing but pressing on to the total oppression of the empire which he shortly after obtained.

Nor, as I said before, did any nation deviate from these rules but they lost their liberty; and of this kind there are

infinite examples, out of which I shall give a few in several ages, which are most known, and occur to every one's reading.

The first example I shall give is of *Pisistratus*, who artfully prevailing with the *Athenians* to allow him fifty guards for the defence of his person, so improved that number, that he seized upon the castle and government, destroyed the commonwealth, and made himself tyrant of *Athens*.

The *Corinthians* being in apprehension of their enemies, made a decree for four hundred men to be kept to defend their city, and gave *Tymophanes* the command over them, who overturned their government, cut off all the principal citizens, and proclaimed himself King of *Corinth*.

Agathocles being the captain-general of the *Syracusians*, got such an interest in the army, that he cut all the senators to pieces, and the richest of the people, and made himself their King.

The *Romans*, for fear of the *Teutones* and *Cimbri*, who like vast inundations threatened their empire, chose *Marius* their general, and, contrary to the constitution of their government, continued him five years in his command, which gave him such opportunity to insinuate, and gain an interest in their army, that he oppressed their liberty: and to this were owing all the miseries, massacres, and ruins which that city suffered under him and *Sylla*, who made the best blood in the world run like water in the streets of *Rome* and turned the whole city into a shambles of the nobility, gentry and people.

The same thing enabled *Cæsar* totally to overthrow that famous commonwealth; for the prolongation of his commission in *Gaul* gave him an opportunity to debauch his army, and then, upon a pretended disgust, he marched to

Rome, drove out the senators, seized the treasury, fought their forces, and made himself perpetual dictator.

Olivarotto di Fermo desired leave of his fellow citizens, that he might be admitted into their town with a hundred horse of his companions; which being granted, he put to the sword all the pricipal citizens, and proclaimed himself their prince.

Francis Sforzà, being general of the *Milanese*, usurped upon them, and made himself duke of *Milan*.

After *Christiern*, the second King of *Denmark*, had conquered *Sweden*, he invited all the senators and nobility to a magnificent entertainment, where, after he had treated them highly for two days, he most barbarously butchered them: none escaped this massacre but the brave *Gustavus Ericson*, who was then a prisoner; but he afterwards escaping through a thousand difficulties, by his good fortune, courage and conduct, drove the *Danes* out of *Sweden*, and restored the *Swedes* to their ancient Kingdom. Nothing then was thought too great for their generous deliverer, every mouth was full of his praises, and by the universal voice of the people he was chosen their King; and to consummate the last testimony of their gratitude, they trusted him with an army: but they soon found their mistake, for it cost them their liberty; and having granted that *unum magnum*, it was too late to dispute any thing else, his successors having been pleased to take all the rest: and now they remain the miserable examples of too credulous generosity.

The story of *Denmark* is so generally known, and so well related by a late excellent author, that it would be impertinence in me to repeat it; only this I will observe, that if the King had not an army at his command, the nobles had never delivered up their government.

Our countryman *Oliver Cromwell* turned out that parliament under which he served, and who had got immortal

honour through the whole world by their great actions; and this he effected by the assistance of an army, which must be allowed to have had as much virtue, sobriety, and public spirit, as hath been known in the world since, amongst that sort of men.

The last instance I shall give, is of a French colony, as I remember, in the *West-Indies*, who having war with the neighbouring *Indians*, and being tired in their march with the extremity of heat, made their slaves carry their arms, who taking that opportunity fell upon them, and cut them to pieces: a just punishment for their folly. And this will always be the fate of those that trust their arms out of their own hands: for it is a ridiculous imagination to conceive men will be servants, when they can be masters. And as Mr. *Harrington* judiciously observes, whatever nation suffers their servants to carry their arms, their servants will make them hold their trenchers.

Some people object, that the republics of *Venice* and *Holland* are instances to disprove my assertion, who both keep great armies, and yet have not lost their liberty. I answer, that neither keep any standing forces within the seats of their government, that is, within the city of *Venice*, or the great towns of the united provinces; but they defend these by their own burghers, and quarter their mercenaries in their conquered countries, *viz.* the *Venetians* in *Greece*, and the continent of *Italy*, and the *Dutch* in *Brabant* and *Flanders*; and the situation of these states makes their armies, so posted, not dangerous to them; for, the *Venetians* cannot be attacked without a Fleet, nor the *Dutch* be ever conquered by their own forces, their country being so full of strong towns, fortified both by Art and Nature, and defended by their own citizens, that it would be a fruitless attempt for their own armies to invade them;

for if they should march against any of their cities, it is but shutting up their gates, and the design is spoiled.

But if we admit that an army might be consistent with freedom in a commonwealth, yet it is otherwise in a free Monarchy; for in the former it is wholly in the disposal of the people, who nominate, appoint, discard, and punish the generals and officers as they think fit, and it is certain death to make any attempt upon their liberties; whereas in the latter, the King is perpetual general, may model the army as he pleases, and it will be called high-treason to oppose him.

And though some princes, as the family of the *Medicis*, *Lewis* the XI*th*, and others, laid the foundation of their tyrannies without the immediate assistance of an army, yet they all found an army necessary to establish them; or otherwise a little experience in the people of the change of their condition would have made them disgorge in a day that ill-gotten power they had been acquiring for an age.

This subject is so self-evident, that I am almost ashamed to prove it: for if we look through the world, we shall find in no country, liberty and an army stand together; so that to know whether a people are free or slaves, it is necessary only to ask, whether there is an army kept amongst them? and the solution of that preliminary question resolves the doubt: as we see in *China*, *India*, *Tartary*, *Persia*, *Ethiopia*, *Turkey*, *Morocco*, *Muscovy*, *Austria*, *France*, *Portugal*, *Denmark*, *Sweden*, *Tuscany*, and all the little principalities of *Germany* and *Italy*, where the people live in the most abandoned slavery; and in countries where no armies are kept within the seat of their government, the people are free, as *Poland*, *Biscay*, *Switzerland*, the *Grisons*, *Venice*, *Holland*, *Genoa*, *Geneva*, *Ragusa*, *Algiers*, *Tunis*, *Hamborough*, *Lubeck*, all the free towns in *Germany*, and *England* and *Scotland*, before

the late reigns. This truth is so obvious, that the most barefaced advocates for an army do not directly deny it, but qualify the matter by telling us, that a number not exceeding fifteen or twenty thousand men, are a handful to so populous a nation as this: now I think that number will bring as certain ruin upon us, as if they were as many millions, and I will give my reasons for it.

It is the misfortune of all countries, that they sometimes lie under an unhappy necessity to defend themselves by arms against the ambition of their governors, and to fight for what is their own; for, if a prince will rule us with a rod of iron, and invade our laws and liberties, and neither be prevailed upon by our miseries, supplications, or tears, we have no power upon earth to appeal to, and therefore must patiently submit to our bondage, or stand upon our own defence; which if we are enabled to do, we shall never be put upon it, but our swords may grow rusty in our hands: for, that nation is surest to live in peace, that is most capable of making war: and a man that hath a sword by his side, shall have least occasion to make use of it. Now I say, if the King hath twenty thousand men before-hand with us, or much less than half that number, the people can make no effort to defend their liberties, without the assistance of a foreign power, which is a remedy most commonly as bad as the disease: and if we have not a power within ourselves to defend our laws, we are no government.

For *England* being a small country, few strong towns in it, and those in the King's hands, the nobility disarmed by the destruction of tenures, and the militia not to be raised but by the King's command, there can be no force levied in any part of *England*, but must be destroyed in its infancy by a few regiments: for what will three or four thousand naked and unarmed men signify against as many troops of mercenary soldiers? what if they should come

into the field, and say you must choose these and these men your representatives; where is your choice? what if they should say, parliaments are seditious and factious assemblies, and therefore ought to be abolished; what is become of your freedom? Or if they should encompass the parliament house, and threaten if they do not surrender up their government, they will put them to the sword; what is become of the old English constitution? These things may be, and have been done in several parts of the world. What is it that causeth the tyranny of the *Turks* at this day, but servants in arms? What is it that preserved the glorious commonwealth of *Rome*, but swords in the hands of its citizens?

And if besides this, we consider the great prerogatives of the crown, and the vast interest the King has and may acquire by the distribution of so many profitable offices of the household, of the revenue, of state, of law, of religion, and the navy, together with the assistance of a powerful party, who have been always the fast and constant friends to arbitrary power, whose only quarrel with his present Majesty is, that he has knocked off the chains and fetters they thought they had locked fast upon us; a party, who hath once engaged us in an unhappy quarrel amongst ourselves (the consequence of which I dread to name) and since in a tedious and chargeable war, at the vast expence of blood and treasure, to avoid that captivity they had prepared for us: I say, if any one considers this, he will be convinced that we have enough to do to guard ourselves against the power of the court, without having an army thrown into the scale against us: and we have found oftner than once by too fatal experience the truth of this; for, if we look back to the late reigns, we shall see this nation brought to the brink of destruction, and breathing out the last gasp of their liberty; and it is more owing to our good fortune,

than to any effort we are able to make, that we escaped the fatal blow.

And I believe no man will deny, but if *Charles* the first had had five thousand men before-hand with us, the people had never struck a stroke for their liberties; or if the late King *James* would have been contented with arbitrary power, without bringing in popery, but he and his black guard would have bound us hand and foot before this time: but when their ill contrived oppression came home to their own doors, they quickly shewed the world how different a thing it was to suffer themselves, and to make other people suffer, and so we came by our deliverance; and though the late King had the nobility, gentry, clergy, people, and his own army against him, and we had a very wise and courageous prince nearly related to the crown, and backed by a powerful state, for our protector, yet we account this revolution next to a miracle.

I will add here, that most of the nations I instanced before were inslaved by small armies: *Oliver Cromwell* left behind him but 17000 men; and the duke of *Monmouth*, who was the darling of the people, was suppressed with two thousand; nay, *Cæsar* seized *Rome* itself with five thousand, and fought the battle of *Pharsalia*, where the fate of the world was decided, with twenty two thousand; and most of the revolutions of the Roman and Ottoman Empires since, were caused by the Pretorian bands, and the court-Janizaries; the former of which never exceeded eight, nor the latter twelve thousand men: and if no greater numbers could make such disturbances in those vast Empires, what will double the force do with us? And they themselves confess it, when they argue for an army; for they tell us we may be surprised with ten or fifteen thousand men from *France*, and having no regular force to oppose them, they will overrun the Kingdom. Now if so small a force can oppose the

King, the militia, with the united power of the nobility, gentry and commons, what will an equal power do against the people, when supported by the royal authority, and a never failing interest that will attend it, except when it acts for the public good?

But we are told, this army is not designed to be made a part of our constitution, but to be kept only for a little time, till the circumstances of *Europe* will better permit us to be without them. But I would know of these gentlemen, when they think that time will be? Will it be during the life of King *James*, or after his death? Shall we have less to fear from the youth and vigor of the pretended Prince of *Wales*, than now from an unhappy man sinking under the load of age and misfortunes? Or will *France* be more capable of offending us, just after this tedious and consumptive war, than hereafter when it has had a breathing time to repair the calamities it has suffered by it? No: we can never disband our army with so much safety as at this time; and this is well known by these conspirators against their country, who are satisfied that a continuation of them now, is an establishment of them for ever: for whilst the circumstances of *Europe* stand in the present posture, the argument will be equal to continue them; if the state of *Europe* should alter to the advantage of *France*, the reason will grow stronger, and we shall be told we must increase our number: but if there should be such a turn of affairs in the world, that we were no longer in apprehension of the French power, they may be kept up without our assistance; nay, the very discontents they may create shall be made an argument for the continuing of them. But if they should be kept from oppressing the people, in a little time they will grow habitual to us, and almost become a part of our constitution, and by degrees we shall be brought to believe them not only not dangerous, but ne-

cessary; for every body sees, but few understand, and those few will never be able to persuade the multitude that there is any danger in those men they have lived quietly with for some years, especially when the disbanding them will (as they will be made believe) cost them more money out of their own pockets to maintain a militia, and of this we have had already an unhappy experience. For *Charles* the second being connived at, in keeping a few guards (which were the first ever known to an English King, besides his pensioners, and his beef-eaters) he insensibly increased their number, till he left a body of men to his successor, great enough to tell the parliament, he would be no longer bound by the laws he had sworn to, and under the shelter and protection of these he raised an army that had put a period to our government, if a complication of causes (which may never happen again) had not presented the Prince of *Orange* with a conjuncture to assert his own and the nation's rights. And though we have so lately escaped this precipice, yet habit has made soldiers so familiar to us, that some who pretend to be zealous for liberty, speak of it as a hardship to his present Majesty, to refuse him as many men as his predecessors, not considering that the raising them then was a violation of our laws, and that his government is built upon the destruction of theirs, and can no more stand upon the same rubbish, than the Kingdom of Heaven be founded in unrighteousness.

But the conspirators say, we need be in no apprehensions of slavery, whilst we keep the power of the purse in our own hands: which is very true; but they do not tell us that he has the power of raising money, to whom no one dares refuse it.

Arma tenenti
Omnia dat, qui justa negat.

For, it is as certain that an army will raise money, as that

money will raise an army; but if this course be too desperate, it is but shutting up the *Exchequer*, and disobliging a few tally-jobbers (who have bought them for fifty *per Cent*, discount) and there will be near three millions a year ready cut and dryed for them: and whoever doubts whether such a method as this is practicable, let him look back to the reign of *Charles* the second. And I am afraid the officers of the Exchequer have not much reason to value themselves for their payments in this reign: at least the purchasers of the annuities are of that opinion, and would be apt to entertain some unreasonable suspicions, if they had not greater security from his Majesty's virtue, than the justice of such ministers. But if we could suppose (whatever is the fate of other countries) that our courtiers design nothing but the public good, yet we ought not to hazard such unusual virtue, by leading it into temptation, which is part of our daily duty to pray against. But I am afraid we do not live in an age of miracles, especially of that sort; our heroes are made of a coarser alloy, and have too much dross mixed with their constitutions for such refined principles: for, in the little experience I have had in the world, I have observed most men to do as much mischief as lay in their power, and therefore am for dealing with them as we do with children and madmen, that is, take away all weapons by which they may do either themselves or others an injury: as I think the sheep in *Boccalini* made a prudent address to *Apollo*, when they desired, that for the future wolves might have no teeth.

When all other arguments fail, they call to their assistance the old tyrant necessity, and tell us the power of *France* is so great, that, let the consequence of an army be what it will, we cannot be without one; and if we must be slaves, we had better be so to a protestant prince than a popish one, and the worst of all popish ones the F——— King. Now I am of Mr. *Johnson's* opinion, that the put-

ting an epithet upon tyranny is false heraldry; for protestant and popish are both alike; and if I must be a slave it is very indifferent to me who is my master, and therefore I shall never consent to be ruled by an army, which is the worst that the most barbarous conquest can impose upon me; which, notwithstanding, we have little reason to fear whilst we keep the seas well guarded.

It is certain there is no country so situated for naval power as *England*. The sea is our element, our seamen have as much hardy bravery, and our ships are as numerous, and built of as good materials as any in the world: such a force well applied and managed is able to give laws to the universe; and if we keep a competent part of it well armed in times of peace, it is the most ridiculous thing in nature to believe any prince will have thoughts of invading us, unless he proposes to be superior to us in naval power: for the preparations necessary for such an undertaking will alarm all *Europe*, give both to us and our confederates time to arm, and put ourselves in a posture of defence. And whoever considers that the prince of *Orange* with six hundred ships brought but fourteen thousand men, and the mighty Spanish armada (then the terror of the world) embarked but eighteen thousand, will be assured that no invasion can be so sudden upon us, but we shall have time to get ready our whole fleet, bring some forces from *Scotland* and *Ireland*, and prepare our own militia if there shall be occasion for it; especially in times of peace, when we shall have the liberty of all the ports of *France*, and shall or may have intelligence from every one of them.

But they tell us such a wind may happen as may be favourable to our enemy, and keep us within our own ports; which I say, as *France* lies to *England*, is almost impossible: for if we lie about *Falmouth*, or the Land's end, no fleet from *Brest* or the ocean can escape us without a mi-

racle; and if the design be to invade us from any port in the channel, a very few ships (which may safely lie at anchor) will certainly prevent it: nor is it to be conceived that that cautious prince will be at a vast expence for the contingency of such a critical wind, or will send an army into a country where their retreat is certainly cut off, when the failing in any part of his design will bring a new war upon him, which lately cost a third part of his people, a great many large countries and strong towns, with all the honour he had heaped up by his former victories, to get rid of.

And here I must confess, that the misapplication of our naval force (which is our known strength) for these last eight years, is the strongest, as it is the most usual argument against me: which unriddles a mystery I did not understand before, though I never was so foolish as to believe all the errors of that kind were the effects of chance or ignorance, or that losing so many opportunities of destroying the French fleet had not some extraordinary, though occult cause; and yet, notwithstanding the restless attempts of our enemies, and the paltry politics of our own wretched St——n, this fleet triumphantly defended us, so that our enemies in eight years' war could not get one opportunity of invading our country.

It is objected, that the officers of our fleet may be corrupted, or that a storm may arise, which may destroy it all at once, and therefore we ought to have two strings to our bow. By which I perceive all their fears lie one way, and that they do not care if they precipitate us into inevitable ruin at home, to prevent a distant possibility of it from *France*. But I think this phantom too may be laid by a well-trained militia, and then all their bugbears will vanish. This word can be no sooner out, but there's a volley of small shot let fly at me: what! must we trust

our safety to an undisciplined mob, who never dreamed of fighting when they undertook the service; who are not inured to the fatigue of a camp, or ever saw the face of an enemy? And then they magnify mercenary troops, as if there was an intrinsic virtue in a red coat, or that a raggamuffin, from robbing of henroosts, in two campaigns could be cudgeled into a hero. Though I must confess the conduct of the court in industriously enervating this force, does in some measure justify their objections: for the detestable policies of the last reigns were with the utmost art and application to disarm the people, and make the militia useless, to countenance a standing army in order to bring in popery and slavery; and if any methods were proposed to make it more serviceable, the court would never suffer them to be debated; and such officers as were more zealous in exercising their companies than others, were reprimanded, as if they designed to raise a rebellion. And now the worthy patriots of this reign are taking advantage of the traitorous neglect and infamous policies of the last. But why may not a militia be made useful? Why may not the nobility, gentry, and freeholders of *England* be trusted with the defence of their own lives, estates and liberties, without having guardians and keepers assigned them? And why may they not defend them with as much vigour and courage as mercenaries who have nothing to lose, nor any other tie to engage their fidelity, than the inconsiderable pay of six pence a day, which they may have from the conqueror?

Why may not the laws for shooting in crossbows be changed into firelocks, and a competent number of them be kept in every parish for the young men to exercise with on holidays, and rewards offered to the most expert, to stir up their emulation?

Why may not the whole militia of *England* be reduced

to sixty thousand, and a third part of those kept by turns in constant exercise?

Why may not a man be enlisted in the militia till he be discharged by his master, as well as in the army till he be discharged by his captain? And why may not the same horse be always sent forth, unless it can be made appear he is dead or maimed?

Why may not the private soldiers of the army, when they are dispersed in the several parts of the Kingdom, be sent to the militia? And why may not the inferior officers of the army in some proportion command them?

I say, these and other like things may be done, and some of them are done in our own plantations, and the Islands of *Jersey* and *Guernsey*, as also in *Poland*, *Switzerland*, and the country of the *Grisons*; which are nations much less considerable than *England*, have as formidable neighbours, no sea nor fleet to defend them, nothing but a militia to depend upon, and yet no one dares attack them: and we have seen as great performances done formerly by the apprentices of *London*, and in the late war by the *Vaudois* in *Savoy*, the *Miquelets* in *Catalonia*, and the militia in *Ireland*, as can be paralleled in history: and so it would be with us, if the court would give their hearty assistance in promoting this design; if the King would appear in person at the head of them, and give rewards and honor to such as deserve them, we should quickly see the young nobility and gentry appear magnificent in arms and equipage, shew a generous emulation in outvying one another in military exercises, and place a noble ambition in making themselves serviceable to their country: as anciently the *Achaians* and *Thebans* from being the most contemptible nations in *Greece*, by the conduct of *Pelopidas*, *Epaminondas*, and *Philopemen*, came to have the best disciplined troops and most excellent soldiers in the world.

They object, that such a militia as this is a standing army, and will be as dangerous, and much more chargeable. I answer—

That there can be no danger from an army where the nobility and chief gentry of *England* are the commanders, and the body of it made up of the freeholders, their sons and servants; unless we can conceive that the nobility and gentry will join in an unnatural design to make void their own titles to their estates and liberties: and if they could entertain so ridiculous a proposition, they would never be obeyed by the soldiers, who will have a respect to those that send them forth and pay them, and to whom they must return again when their time is expired. For if I send a man, I will as surely choose one who shall fight for me, as a mercenary officer will choose one that shall fight against me; and the late governments are witnesses to the truth of this, who debauched the militia more than ever I hope to see it again, and yet durst never rely upon them to assist their arbitrary designs; as we may remember in the Duke of *Monmouth's* invasion, their officers durst not bring them near his army for fear of a revolt. Nay, the pensioner-parliament themselves turned short upon the court, when they expected them to give the finishing stroke to our ruin.

To the last part of the objection, that this militia will be more chargeable than an army; I answer, that since (as I suppose) no man proposes wholly to lay them aside; if we add the extraordinary expence of maintaining twenty thousand men to the ordinary charge of the militia, it is much more than sufficient to make the latter useful. But if this objection were true, it ought not to enter into competition with the preservation of our laws and liberties; for it is better to give a third part of my estate, if it were necessary, than to have all taken from me.

And though it should be granted, that a militia is not as serviceable as an army kept to constant discipline, yet I believe these gentlemen themselves will confess, that sixty thousand of them trained as before, are as good as twenty thousand of their standing troops, which is the question; for it is impossible to have them both useful at the same time, they being as incompatible as broad and clipt money, never current together; and therefore the court must depend wholly upon a militia, or else they will not depend upon them at all. And this by the way may silence that objection, that we must keep our army till the militia be disciplined; for that will never be done whilst the court has an army: and the same objection will be made seven years hence as now; so that a small army can be of no use to us, but to make our fleet neglected, to hinder the militia from being trained, and enslave us at home; for they are too few to defend us against an invasion, and too many for the people to oppose.

I dare speak with the greater assurance upon this subject, having the authority of as great men as the world hath produced for my justification. *Machiavel* spends several chapters to prove, that no prince or state ought to suffer any of their subjects to make war their profession, and that no nation can be secure with any other forces than a settled militia. My Lord *Bacon* in several places bears his testimony against a standing army, and particularly he tells us, that a mercenary army is fittest to invade a country, but a militia to defend it; because the first have estates to get, and the latter to protect. Mr. *Harrington* hath founded his whole *Oceana* upon a trained militia; and I have lately read a French book, called a history of the politics of *France*, which says, *Enfin si on veut ruiner les Anglois il suffit de les obliger d tenir des troupes sur pied.* Nay, I believe no author

ever treated of a free government, that did not express his abhorrence of an army; for (as my Lord *Bacon* says) whoever does use them, though he may spread his feathers for a time, he will mew them soon after; and raise them with what design you please, yet, like the *West-India* dogs in *Boccaline*, in a little time they will certainly turn sheep-biters.

Perhaps it will be said, that the artillery of the world, is changed since some of these wrote, and war is become more a mystery, and therefore more experience is necessary to make good soldiers. But wherein does this mystery consist? not in exercising a company, and obeying a few words of command; these are mysteries that the dullest noddle will comprehend in a few weeks. Nay, I have heard that the modern exercise is much shorter and easier than the ancient. But the great improvements in war are in regular encampments, fortification, gunnery, skilful engineering, &c. These are arts not to be learned without much labour, and experience, and are as much gained in the closet as in the field; and I suppose no man will say, that the keeping standing forces is necessary to make a good engineer.

As to actual experience in war, that is not essential either to a standing army or a militia, as such; but the former may be without it, and the latter gain it according as they have opportunities of action. 'Tis true, at present the army hath been trained up in a long war, and hath gained great knowledge: but these men will not be lost when they are disbanded, they will be still in *England;* and if the parliament does give them a gratuity suitable to the service they have done their country, they will be ready to resume their arms whenever occasion offers.

But I desire to know of these patriots how comes an army necessary to our preservation now, and never since the conquest before? Did ever the prevailing party in the

wars of *York* and *Lancaster* attempt to keep up a standing army to support themselves? No: they had more sense than to sacrifice their own liberty, and more honour than to enslave their country, the more easily to carry on their own faction. Were not the *Spaniards* as powerful, as good soldiers, and as much our enemies, as the *French* are now? Was not *Flanders* as near us as *France?* and the popish interest in Queen *Elizabeth's* time as strong as the Jacobite is now? and yet that most excellent Princess never dreamed of a standing army, but thought her surest empire was to reign in the hearts of her subjects, which the following story sufficiently testifies. When the Duke of *Alanson* came over to *England*, and for some time had admired the riches of the city, the conduct of her government, and the magnificence of her court, he asked her amidst so much splendor where were her guards? which question she resolved a few days after as she took him in her coach through the city, when pointing to the people (who received her in crowds with repeated acclamations) These, said she, my Lord, are my guards; these have their hands, their hearts, and their purses always ready at my command: and these were guards indeed, who defended her through a long and successful reign of forty-four years against all the machinations of *Rome*, the power of *Spain*, a disputed title, and the perpetual conspiracies of her own popish subjects; a security the Roman Emperors could not boast of with their pretorian bands, and their Eastern and Western armies.

Were not the *French* as powerful in *Charles* the second and King *James's* time, as they are after this long and destructive war, and a less alliance to oppose them? and yet we then thought a much less army than is now contended for, a most insupportable grievance; insomuch that in *Charles* the second's reign the grand jury present-

ed them, and the pensioner parliament voted them to be a nuisance, sent Sir *Jos. W——son* to the tower for saying, the King might keep guards for the defence of his person, and addressed to have them disbanded. And now our apostates would make their court by doing what the worst parliament ever *England* saw could not think of without horror and confusion. They say the King of *France* was in league with our late Kings, so he is with us; and he would have broke it then, if he had thought it safe, and for his interest as much as now. But they say we have more disaffected persons to join with him; which I must deny, for I believe no King of *England* in any age had deservedly more interest than the present; and if during such an expensive war, in which we have consumed so much blood and treasure, paid such vast and unequal taxes, lost so many thousand ships, and borne a shock by recoining our money, which would have torn up another nation from its foundation, and reduced it to its ancient chaos, when most countries would have sunk under the misfortune, and repined at their deliverance (as men in sickness commonly quarrel with their dearest friends) I say, if at that time he had so great and universal an interest, there can be no doubt but in times of peace, when the people reap the fruits of that courage and conduct he hath shewn in their defence, he will be the most beloved and glorious Prince that ever filled the English throne.

I will make one assertion more, and then conclude this discourse, *viz.* That the most likely way of restoring King *James*, is maintaining a standing army to keep him out.

For the King's safety stands upon a rock whilst it depends upon the solid foundation of the affections of the people, which is never to be shaken till 'tis as evident as the sun in the firmament, that there is a formed design to overthrow our laws and liberties; but if we

keep a standing army, all depends upon the uncertain and capricious humours of the soldiery, which in all ages have produced more violent and sudden revolutions, than ever have been known in unarmed governments: for there is such a chain of dependence amongst them, that if two or three of the chief officers should be disobliged, or have intrigues with Jacobite mistresses; or if the King of *France* could once again buy his pensioners into the court or army, or offer a better market to some that are in already, we shall have another rehearsal revolution, and the people be only idle spectators of their own ruin. And whosoever considers the composition of an army, and doubts this, let him look back to the Roman Empire, where he will find, out of twenty six Emperors, sixteen deposed and murdered by their own armies; nay, half the history of the world is made up of examples of this kind: but we need not go any farther than our own country, where we have but twice kept armies in times of peace, and both times they turned out their own masters. The first under *Cromwell*, expelled that parliament under which they had fought successfully for many years; afterwards under General *Monk* they destroyed the government they before set up, and brought back *Charles* the second, and he afterwards disbanded them lest they might have turned him out again. The other instance is fresh in every one's memory, how King *James's* army joined with the prince of *Orange*, now our rightful and lawful King. And what could have been expected otherwise from men of dissolute and debauched principles, who call themselves soldiers of fortune? who make murder their profession, and enquire no farther into the justice of the cause, than how they shall be paid; who must be false, rapacious and cruel in their own defence. For having no other profession, or subsistence to

depend upon, they are forced to stir up the ambition of Princes, and engage them in perpetual quarrels, that they may share of the spoils they make. Such men, like some sort of ravenous fish, fare best in a storm; and therefore we may reasonably suppose they will be better pleased with the tyrannical government of the late King, than the mild and gracious administration of his present Majesty, who came over to *England* to rescue us from oppression, and he has done it, and triumphs in it in spite of his enemies.

In this discourse I have purposely omitted speaking of the lesser inconveniences attending a standing army, such as frequent quarrels, murders and robberies; the destruction of all the game in the country; the quartering upon public, and sometimes private houses; the influencing elections of parliament by an artificial distribution of quarters; the rendering so many men useless to labour, and almost propagation, together with a much greater destruction of them, by taking them from a laborious way of living to a loose idle life; and besides this, the insolence of the officers, and the debaucheries that are committed both by them and their soldiers in all the towns they come in, to the ruin of multitudes of women, dishonour of their families, and ill example to others; and a numerous train of mischiefs besides, almost endless to enumerate. These are trivial as well as particular grievances in respect of those I have treated about, which strike at the heart's blood of our constitution, and therefore I thought these not considerable enough to bear a part in a discourse of this nature: besides, they often procure their own remedy, working miracles, and making some men see, that were born blind, and impregnable against all the artillery of reason; for experience is the only mistress of fools: a wise man will know a pike will bite, when he sees

his teeth, which another will not make discovery of but by the loss of a finger.

What I have said here against standing armies, I would have understood of such as are the instruments of tyranny and their country's ruin, and therefore I need make no apology to our own which was raised by the consent of the parliament in this just and necessary war, and next under God and our great and glorious deliverer, have by their bravery and conduct preserved our liberties, and the protestant religion through *Europe*. For if in future reigns any designs should be levelled against our laws, we may be assured these men would be discarded, and others promoted in their rooms who are fit for such arbitrary purposes.

Nor do I think it reasonable that our army should be ruined by that peace, which by their courage and fidelity they have procured for their country; and I doubt not but the generosity and gratitude of the parliament will give them a donative equal to their commissions, which, when the foreigners are paid and sent home, will amount to no extraordinary sum; at most it is but supposing the war to have six months' longer continuance, which is an easy composition for the charge of keeping them. But if there are any gentlemen amongst them who think we can no otherwise express our gratitude, but by signing and sealing our own ruin, I hope we shall disappoint their expectations, and not give the world occasion to tell so foolish a story of us, as that we turned to grass one of the most powerful monarchs in the world for breaking our laws, that we have maintained an eight years' war at the expence of forty millions of money, and the blood of three hundred thousand men, to justify the glorious action we have done; that by it we preserved all *Europe* besides, and lost our own liberties; at least I hope it shall not be said we consented to it.

IRISH ORATORY;

WITH ITS

EFFECTS

ON THE MEASURE OF

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION

CONSIDERED.

BY AN IRISH PROTESTANT,

AUTHOR OF "THE AGENCY OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE," &c. &c.

ORIGINAL.

LONDON,

1817.

PREFACE.

In the following pages I have endeavoured to express the feelings of an Irishman, at seeing the character of my country lowered, and its interests sacrificed by the vulgar ambition of a few very unworthy individuals, who have taken every opportunity of giving a most conspicuous publicity to sentiments not more remarkable for the astonishing ignorance which they betray, than for the frightful audacity with which they are put forward. If I have succeeded in giving a just representation of the light in which these men are viewed by the sober and rational part of their countrymen, I hope the imputation which I have frequently had the mortification to hear cast upon our literature and our loyalty will no longer be insisted on by impartial enquirers. As I have merely glanced at Catholic Emancipation it may not be superfluous to preface a few observations on the present state of that important question.

The advocates of Emancipation, in this country, may be divided into two classes. First, those who wish for that measure merely as it may be supposed to forward the separation of this country from Great Britain. Secondly, those who imagine that the measure would serve the country; without, at the same time, having any tendency to endanger British connection. Of these it may be observed, that the former have diminished, and the latter increased

rapidly within the last twenty years. The opponents of Emancipation may also be divided into two classes; to which the same observation is applicable. First, those who are absolutely and unequivocally against ever conceding their claims to the Catholics: and who imagine that there is something in the genius of their religion incompatible with the well-being of the constitution in church and state as established at the revolution. Secondly, those who acknowledge that there will come a time when their claims may be safely conceded to the Catholics, without any danger either to the church or state: and who, although they admit that the genius of the Catholic religion was, originally, irreconcileably hostile to such a civil and religious constitution as ours, yet maintain that it has been so mitigated by the character of the government, and the operation of those liberal principles, to the influence of which it has been so long exposed, that it is chimerical to entertain any apprehensions that it can, in future, be formidable to our liberties. It will be observed that this class do not so much dispute the policy of the measure itself, as the propriety of the time when it should be adopted. They think that government should wait until they have proofs somewhat more satisfactory than are at present to be found, of the improvement and loyalty of the Irish Catholics, before they adopt a measure which must so materially alter the condition of so important a member of the British Empire. But as soon as ever it is ascertained that the Catholic body are *affectionate* in their attachment to the British Government, that moment it will be expedient to grant them Emancipation. It is, indeed, replied to this, that the improvement of the Catholics in this country, has been considerably retarded by reason of the disabilities under which they labor: and that to remove these would be the most expeditious mode, not merely of tranquillising their political discontent, but of raising their moral respectability. The objectors are, however, of opinion that there is a *certain point* of improvement which must be passed, before the best affections of the Catholics *can* be gained over by any concessions, to the true interests of these countries, *as at present connected.* If a large property be suddenly conferred on an uneducated man, at an early period of life, he may waste it in riot and dissipation. If withheld, until years and experience shall have rendered him more fit for the rational enjoyment of it, it may prove

not only a benefit to himself, but a blessing to his country. The objectors conceive that this observation is, in some measure, applicable to the concession of their claims to the Catholics: and that they may be granted so early as to frustrate any good effects which might be expected from conceding them at a more *seasonable* juncture. They think it unwise to entrust a people filled with religious bigotry and national resentment, with any additional portion of power, while their understandings are as yet darkened by ignorance, and while it is unlikely that they will form correct notions concerning the real interests of their country. At the same time they are ready to acknowledge and extol the policy of admitting these people into the fullest participation in constitutional privileges, whenever it shall be unequivocally ascertained that their prejudices against a protestant government have been sufficiently allayed, and that the advantages of British connection are thoroughly appreciated by them. To these views of the objecting party the Catholic advocates have replied with much cant and declamation. I shall not at present stop to examine whether, or in what degree, the views above alluded to may be considered correct. But that they have not been met with fairness, or examined with coolness by the majority of those who have been loudest in their clamour for the Catholics, will, I think, be acknowledged by every impartial reader. Earl Grey, the Marquis Wellesley, and Mr. Plunket, are amongst the most distinguished of their parliamentary advocates who have discussed the question of Emancipation like statesmen. Most of the others have had recourse either to miserable sophistry, or wretched declamation. And the misfortune of this has been, that instead of that calm, and extensive, and enlightened survey of the subject which every man of an enlarged understanding should aim at, each party have been content with replying to the narrow and illiberal objections of their adversaries; as if the refutation of these involved the establishment of principles perhaps equally erroneous. Thus, it is asserted by one party that it is dangerous to grant Emancipation to the Catholics, because they are disaffected to the government. It is triumphantly replied by the other, that, whatever may have been the sentiments of Catholics in former times, they are not, at present, disaffected to the government; and numerous instances are produced, in which, under difficult circumstances, they main-

tained an unshaken allegiance. Now this is quite satisfactory as an answer to the objection *which had been grounded on the present disaffection of the Catholics.* But it is by no means satisfactory as a reason for immediately granting them Emancipation. Because although it clearly ascertains that the Catholics are not *disaffected* to the government; it by no means ascertains *how* they are affected towards it. And we cannot therefore, *from this circumstance*, conclude that their attachment to the existing establishments would be increased, by such a repeal of legislative enactments as would enable them more effectually to dispute their authority. To ascertain a point of this kind, is, I take it, an exceedingly difficult task; and one for which none are less fitted than shallow and impertinent declaimers. The foundation of any wise decision on this subject must be laid on a calm and discriminating observation of the state of society: such a one as would afford ample scope to the profoundest researches of a Montesquieu or a Hume: and the light and flippant and frivolous declamations of school-boy orators, or bigotted partizans, are surely, on such a subject, to be little regarded. Such, at least, are the sentiments of by far the most numerous and respectable portion of those who oppose the claims of the Catholics. They think, moreover, that the condition of these people is, by no means, so deplorable as is represented; that they are at present experiencing the protection of law, and the enjoyment of liberty and property; and that the only species of persecution to which they are subject, is that modern one which Swift facetiously denominates "*The want of power.*" They imagine that the Catholics may endure a privation of this kind, without much discontent, until it shall seem wise to the legislature to adopt a more liberal policy towards them; and, in the mean time, instead of repining at the advantages which their protestant fellow subjects at present possess, endeavour to console themselves with reflecting on the superiority of their own constitution, above what it must have been *if their ancestors under James the second had been successful.*

Now I would by no means be understood either to adopt or to reject the foregoing view of this important question. I mean to pronounce nothing categorically upon it. It is sufficient for me that it is the view of a prevailing majority against the claims of the Catholics: it will be for the advocates of that body to consider what

the most likely mode is of diminishing the hostility of such antagonists, or winning them over to their cause. For my part I do not think that this end will be best effected by threats, railing, calumny, ingratitude, misrepresentation, &c. &c. &c. But perhaps I may be mistaken: and government may be induced to accede to the demands of the swaggering demagogues, for the same reason that providence is supposed, by the Algerines, to be propitious to the supplications of the Jews, merely to be relieved from their foul breath. If this view of the subject should prove correct, most of the observations contained in the following pages must appear impertinent and unfounded.

ON

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.

THERE is an opinion, which very generally prevails in England, that civilization has as yet gone on but very slowly in this country; and which seems to be justified by nothing more than by the popularity, which many very faulty productions have obtained amongst certain descriptions of people here. Bad taste, it will be easily admitted, is no proof of barbarity: for not only the arts which heighten the enjoyment of life, but even the severer sciences have been known to have made considerable progress amongst nations whose ideas on subjects of polite literature were far from refined. But the peculiarities which distinguish the literature, and particularly the oratory of the Irish have been thought to partake of that mingled character, in which great irregularity is compensated by occasional brilliancy, great coarseness and extravagance is relieved by occasional pathos and sublimity, and which exhibits the boldness and raciness of original conception, but reluctantly and imperfectly submittting to those rules of just composition, the violation of which would be offensive to the man whose taste has been refined, as their observance would be irksome to the uncultivated barbarian. The speeches of Mr. Curran have been considered by many abundantly illustrative of this observation. With great power of moving the passions and fixing the attention of his audience, that gentleman, I will venture to say, has sacrificed even his own notions of good writing, to the forwardness of an unchastised imagination, and the gratification of an exasperated sensibility. Nor is it alone by a coarseness of imagery, and an ostentatious glare of fancy that this writer offends. He sometimes ventures to expatiate on topics of general policy

with all the confidence and temerity of Burke, without possessing either the searching sagacity, or the bold and comprehensive grasp of mind by which that eminent man was so distinguished. As a dialectician Mr. Curran is often subtle and acute. But he possesses no deep thought; no commanding reason. The poetry of his speeches is often excellent, the politics, execrable. Indeed it appears strange that one so highly gifted in other respects, should be so totally destitute of those higher intellectual requisites, which could alone render such an ascendancy as he is capable of acquiring available for any good purpose. But it sometimes happens that strong feelings and brilliant fancy are accompanied by a weakness of understanding; or rather are the causes why the understanding may not be sufficiently improved. And where this takes place the mind is driven upon a devious and eccentric course of action, in which its higher faculties are only likely to lead it more astray; but which is much more sure to draw the gaze and excite the wonder of the vulgar than if its motions were determined by the more apparent laws of a presiding intelligence.

It is not my intention at present to enlarge more fully on Mr. Curran's merits as an orator. Suffice it to say, that with genius sufficient to command distinction any where, Ireland seems to be the Theatre where talents such as his may be exhibited to most advantage. He has no pretensions whatever to the character of a statesman. And whilst his countrymen, proverbially warm-hearted and generous, are disposed to cherish, with enthusiastic fondness, every indication of vigor and ability, they have not as yet arrived at that fastidious refinement of taste which would lead them to observe, with any very great severity, on the blemishes and absurdities with which that may be united.

But though the charges of irregularity and extravagance that have been made against the oratory of Mr. Curran are, in a great degree, well founded, it may be doubted whether the conclusions that have been drawn from them, with respect to our imperfect civilization, are true to the extent that has been alleged. This, at least, is certain, that the prevalence of a very vicious style of eloquence, to which the speeches of Mr. Curran have chiefly given rise, may be fully accounted for without having recourse to any supposition that would reduce us, in point of improvement, below our neighbours. This eloquence is addressed to a class of persons who are not very competent judges of its merits; who are as numerous perhaps in England as in Ireland; and quite as ready to applaud whatever may seem to favor the political principles which they have adopted. It is cried up by news-papers many of which are conducted by the orators themselves, or their immediate friends. But what above all other things contributes to continue the popularity of these people, is, that they are opposed to an

educated and constitutional party who are sufficiently confident in their own strength, and who regard the absurdity and malevolence of their talentless and illiberal adversaries more with sorrow than with anger. The learning, the probity and the property of the county are so decidedly on their side, that they cannot be persuaded of the necessity for making any actual opposition to a system of slander so vile, and a species of intemperance so absurd as must, in the end, frustrate their own objects. But it requires so little learning, and so small a share of taste to discover the falsehood, and be offended at the extravagance which abounds in what has been impudently denominated Irish eloquence, that many are surprised how even the commonest news-writers can pass them over without animadversion. Neither would they, if the orators had not adopted their own cause. Just imagine Mr. Phillips, for instance, *defending* any unpopular measure of the government, and is there any probability that all *the* GLARING *errors* at least of his most tumid eloquence would not be successfully exposed? It is quite incredible in that case that his speeches must not be discovered to be as cold and as heartless as they are evidently irrational and absurd. Indeed I could as soon conceive a newspaper critic mistaking Tom Thumb for a real Tragedy, as seriously ascribing to the speeches of Mr. Phillips a particle of genuine eloquence.

I am persuaded that the character of this country has suffered more from the spurious pretensions of its political agitators than we at home are apt to believe. The silent pity and indifference with which they are regarded by all the better sort of persons, is either not perceived, or construed into a kind of acquiescence in their claims, which must greatly detract from our moral and political respectability. When the speeches of such a gentleman as Mr. Phillips are ostentatiously set forth in the news-papers, accompanied by columns of panegyric, and purporting to have been delivered with unbounded applause, it is impossible that they must not be considered in some measure characteristic of the people: It is impossible that those who know us only through the medium of news-papers must not conceive us, according to the character of these speeches, either wise or foolish, virtuous or vicious, barbarous or civilized. A few discerning persons may, perhaps, perceive the unfairness of such an inference. But the majority of those who read such speeches must entertain opinions of our ignorance and barbarism which rarely meet with any effectual refutation. Magee, Dunn, Bushe, and Burrowes, the men who in this country really shed a lustre on their respective professions, and who would be willingly recognized as the legitimate representatives of its talent and literature, are so unostentatiously occupied in their several pursuits that little is heard or known about them beyond

the theatre of their actual exertions. Plunkett, indeed, appears occasionally in Parliament. But he is rather looked upon as a splendid exception to the rule by which we are judged of, than as affording any solid objection to its general validity. And the astonishing effect which he produces is heightened, no doubt, by the consideration that talents such as his should have been brought to such perfection in a country where the bulk of the people are as yet so unimproved, and where even the better sort are but struggling through the bewildering mists of an imperfect civilization. Since, then, the character of the country is in some measure at the mercy of the popular orators, it becomes the bounden duty of every man, who has a proper respect for the national honor, or an equitable regard for the national interest, to lose no opportunity of rebutting the calumnies with which we are assailed; and to be convinced that the witless politicians, whom his pity has so often protected from the severity of his contempt, are no longer innocent in proportion to their insignificance; but that they possess, in the very impunity, by which they should be disgraced, a power of doing the country more signal mischief, than could possibly result from the darkest designs of more talented incendiaries.

The people of England never will measure the degree of political power with which it might be advisable to entrust us, by any other standard than the degree of improvement which we may manifest in our politics and morality. Of the wisdom of increasing our power, in order to effect this improvement, they never will be persuaded. Not only so long as we actually are, but so long as we are suspected to be either incapable of profiting by, or liable to abuse the blessings of constitutional liberty, so long, we may be assured, they will be withheld from us. In a victorious country, the progress of mind is often outstripped by the progress of liberty. But when a conquered country looks up for any improvement in her condition to a victorious one, the progress of liberty is generally posterior to the progress of mind. The people must not only be sensible of the advantages for which they are seeking; but, what is extremely mortifying to national vanity, they must also be convinced that these advantages could be derived so fully in no other way: that they are preferable to any which could have flowed from their separate and independent existence, and would be an ample recompense for their previous humiliation. It is thus alone that that identity of interest could be manifested which would justify a government in taking off those restraints which might before have been found necessary to bridle a spirit of disaffection. And until the conquered country shall not only have actually submitted to the existing government, but cordially recognised it as the source of blessings which it could not otherwise expect to enjoy, no such sincerity of reconciliation can be presumed between them as would give

the victorious country a sufficient security, that any additional privileges which it might be disposed to yield might not be abused to its disadvantage. To bring these considerations home to ourselves — A large party in this country took part with the abdicated monarch at the period of the revolution. They were, fortunately for the interests of religion and liberty, defeated, deprived of their constitutional privileges, and a monopoly of political power was established in favor of those who had continued unshaken *in their allegiance to the Constitution.* This was done in order the more effectually to disable the offending party from effecting that mischief secretly or treacherously, which they had failed to accomplish by force of arms in the field; but which, it was supposed, they were by no means the less disposed to in their hearts, because they had been frustrated in their traitorous intentions. Well: a century of privation elapses, and the descendants of people begin to see their error. They begin to see the barbarism and tyranny of that system for which their ancestors had so stupidly fought; and to sigh after the advantages of that constitution which these misguided men would have subverted. They look with horror upon the absurd bigotry, which involved their country in civil war; and are persuaded of the intrinsic superiority of that order of things which dates its commencement from the period of the revolution. Now, under these circumstances, the only question with government ought to be, the extent and the sincerity of this persuasion. If they have good reason to believe these people sincere in their detestation of the principles of the Irish rebellion, and cordial in their attachment to the existing government, it may be advisable to mitigate, in a considerable degree, if not finally to abolish, the obnoxious restrictions. If they see that such good principles prevail in any considerable degree, it would be highly advisable that all factious distinctions should be as much as possible removed, in order to facilitate their general reception. Nothing prevents the good sense of a high spirited and susceptible people from operating, in a salutary way, upon their conduct, so much as the shame of being supposed to abandon, from interested motives, the errors or the prejudices of their ancestors. It behoves a good government, therefore, to be critically aware of the time when this good sense is beginning to operate, in order that it may be enabled to assist its influence, by removing all cause for that false shame, which is no dishonorable ingredient in the character of a people. But how is a government, residing at a distance, to know when this change is beginning to take place, if not by the public proceedings which receive the sanction of this disfranchised portion of the community. How is it to judge of their fitness for a more equal participation in constitutional privileges, if not by the advocates whom they adopt, and the principles which they manifest in their public meetings? But if their debates

be conducted with a tone of asperity not only not conciliatory, but absolutely libellous; if their advocates consist of men not only not distinguished for talent or constitutional feeling, but in whom a want of talent is compensated by an ill-concealed antipathy to British connection; if, putting their principles out of the question, the absolute folly manifested by those men rendered it almost incredible that they should be chosen, by any respectable or well-ordered community to treat with a government on their behalf; if they had repeatedly proved themselves, in the eyes of all discerning persons, utterly and absolutely unworthy of confidence, not merely as politicians, but as men; not merely as patriots, but as gentlemen; and were nevertheless continued in the confidence of those whose cause they affected to plead, is it possible that government could see, in such a people, any fitness for a more liberal exercise of political power; or that their cause could be recommended to a discerning legislature by conduct so preposterously impolitic? And yet has not such been, for a series of years, to all outward appearance at least, the conduct of the Catholics of Ireland? What means had the people of England for knowing that the men who set forth the foolish resolutions, and uttered the seditious speeches, were not bona fide representing the sentiments of a respectable and talented portion of their countrymen? How could it be conceived, at the other side of the water, that these speeches and resolutions were only not contradicted because they were despised; that they met with no public opposition merely because they met with no public support, except from the wretched mob from whom their measures usually receive the mockery of a sanction? These are facts of which the people of England could not have been sufficiently aware: and an opinion has accordingly prevailed amongst them that the standard of loyalty and politics in this country has been taken from the speeches of the catholic orators; an opinion which, if true, would justify almost any severity of restraint which could be imposed; because it would prove us not only unfitted for, but unworthy of freedom. We who reside at home know how wrong it is to entertain such an opinion. We know how wrong it is, for instance, to set down Mr. Phillips as affording a fair specimen of the eloquence, Mr. O'C———, of the loyalty, or Mr. O'G———, of the learning of Ireland. We can also account for the forbearance, (culpable, indeed, when we consider its consequences,) to which these men are indebted for their importance. We know, besides, how earnestly the cunning ones amongst them deprecate the success of their own measures. We know how much their consequence depends upon keeping the question of emancipation undecided. We therefore are at no loss to account for what Mr. Curran has aptly denominated the *apery* of legislation by which this country has been disgraced, without supposing that it represents the

genuine sentiments of the people. We know the bulk of the catholic body to be sober, loyal, patriotic, and increasing in intelligence every day. We know that the turbulent and seditious amongst them do not bear the same proportion to the people at large that the Luddites do to the people of England; and that the moral strength of the catholic body is so decidedly favorable to British connection, that no apprehension need be entertained of any event that could interrupt it. We know that all the turgid and declamatory eloquence, in which so many wild schemes are darkly intimated, when considered attentively, signifies absolutely nothing: and that the people of England have been frequently misled by understanding literally what the Irish Orators are pleased to denominate *figures of speech*. All this is perfectly plain to those who are competently informed about the affairs of Ireland. And in this country a man would be looked upon as a novice, indeed, in politics, if he affected to think otherwise. But we should consider that this is not the appearance which things have to those who reside at a distance; who can hear only the noise and the turbulence of the agitators, but are unable to perceive the silent progress of improvement both in politics and morality, which is going on amongst the people. It is impossible for them, therefore, not to entertain fears for the tranquillity of the country, which a knowledge of the real state of the case is only necessary to prove unfounded: and an opinion of the consequence of Irish demagogues, which a true description of their characters would easily convert into a sentiment much more comical than complimentary. With such a persuasion on their minds it cannot be expected that they should cease to regard us with an unnecessary degree of jealousy: or that they could feel that confidence which would be absolutely necessary to justify them in making any liberal concessions of constitutional privileges to the Catholics of Ireland. But to whom are we indebted for this? To our agitators—To our factious, designing, illiberal agitators. Many of them men of neither rank, nor talent, nor property, nor respectability: whom it costs nothing to sacrifice the character of the country to the miserable ambition of arriving at a distinction, which is really as degrading in its nature, as the means of obtaining it are unprincipled and absurd.

It is folly for the Catholics to imagine the parliament will be intimidated into a compliance with their demands; or that the privileges for which they are contending will ever be surrendered to them *by capitulation*. They talk much of their physical strength; of their relative importance in the empire; of the brave men of their persuasion who have crowded into his Majesty's fleets and armies; and intimate as much as that these will withdraw themselves from the service of their king and country, if government should any longer defer their emancipation. Now this is all so very foolish, and so very wicked, that one does not know how

seriously, to reply to it. It must be observed, however, that no where is the gross stupidity of such an insinuation better understood than in Ireland. It is hard to suppose how those who utter such sentiments can be actuated by any other motive than a desire to inflame the minds of the people of England against us, and to bring down the contempt of every man of sense and feeling upon their cause and their country. Fortunate is it, therefore, that the public mind is sufficiently enlightened at the present day to distinguish the merits of the cause from the folly and intemperance of the advocates; and that parliament will not, in its wisdom, reject a good measure, because it may happen to be badly recommended. But does it not occur to these people, that the Irish Catholics are at present enjoying a degree of liberty and security, which they will not easily be disposed to risque, by the hope of any precarious privileges which they could snatch in the scramble of a revolution? Even if the lower orders of the Irish Catholics were absurd enough to renounce their allegiance to the British government, do these men ever ask themselves where they could possibly find leaders? Can they be preposterous enough to imagine that they could select from the educated classes of society *at the present day*, as many respectable and talented persons as would be necessary to organize an insurrection. Thank heaven, things are happily changed from what they were twenty years ago. Thank heaven, the rank and the intellect of the country have become so thoroughly sensible of the full measure of guilt which they must incur, by abetting so atrocious a measure, that the most timorous have lost any apprehension of danger to the constitution from such a cause, and a *sense of interest* has at length become sufficiently strong to secure the allegiance of this country, upon the continuance of which it would be very absurd *in any statesman* to speculate from mere motives of gratitude and affection. As to the slanderous imputation upon the loyalty of our catholic soldiery, it may be sufficient to observe, that they entered into his Majesty's service with a full knowledge of the disabilities under which they laboured; and that nothing has since occurred to cause any alteration in those sentiments of affection for his government, which they have attested by the solemnity of an oath, and are bound to cherish by the honour of a soldier—Oh! but it seems these men have fought, and bled, and conquered for their country. They have raised Great Britain by their victories to the highest pitch of glory. And, it has been triumphantly asked, if they accomplished such things in a state of bondage, what must they not have accomplished if they had been free? Now this is a fair specimen not only of the logic, but of the rhetoric of the catholic orators. But even to this, we may in our turn reply, by asking, what *could* our

gallant armies do *more* than they have done? Could they have been more brave in battle? Could they have been more moderate in victory? Oh! let them always be but as valiant as they have hitherto proved themselves, and we shall be well satisfied. Is there a quarter of the world that does not resound with their praise? In India, in Egypt, in Italy, in Spain, in Holland, in America, have they not upheld the honour of their king and country, and covered themselves with glory? Not more fruitless than wicked is it in the agitators to endeavour to disseminate the germs of discontent amongst our brave and high-minded soldiery. Their most splendid services have been performed at times when the din of treason was ringing in their ears, and sedition was standing erect with expectation of some disastrous event which might reduce their country's grandeur. Vain, then, is it to expect that they will now desert that cause in its triumph, which they could never be seduced to abandon in its day of peril and distress. Or that when the honour of their country has become associated with the glories of their profession, they will turn their backs upon the one, and draw their swords upon the other—that they will renounce those principles in the tide of their prosperity, which they so gloriously manifested under circumstances of difficulty and discouragement, to the consternation of their enemies, and the astonishment of the world.

But if there could possibly be any ties upon the fealty of our catholic soldiery stronger than those of plighted honour and sworn allegiance, we have them. They have served much abroad. *They have travelled into catholic countries. They have witnessed the degree of toleration which was there extended to those professing a different faith.* They have seen even the favored subjects of these countries languishing under a tyranny the most ruthless and intolerable; and they have been enabled to compare their condition with that of their own people at home. They have seen that country, which was anciently the favored seat of science and commerce, and chivalry, so reduced by despotism, as almost to become a prey to an unprincipled invader. Its people weak, prostrate, miserable. Its character faded; its resources exhausted; its energies impaired. Stricken, as it were by a visitation of providence, with all that could at once enfeeble and vilify: with all that could consummate its physical debility and moral degradation. They have seen all this; and far from coveting the blessing of residing under such a government, its example has been a practical refutation of the lessons of discontent which they had heard; and they have blessed God that they have been born in a country where, although their religion subjects the great ones amongst them to certain political disabilities, the rights of conscience are yet respected, and no cruel and inexorable tribunal

exists, which applies torture as a test of truth; where their persons are protected from arbitrary imprisonment, and their properties guarded against rapacious confiscation; where every reasonable encouragement is given to honourable and lucrative industry; where the poor man may go forth rejoicing to his labour, and return home cheerful and contented, to the peaceful enjoyment of his humble earnings; where he need suffer no debasing prostration of spirit in the presence of wealth or power, because, so long as he continues to deserve it, the law is his defence, and a hair of his head dare not be touched with impunity.

Strongly, however, as I am impressed with the superior advantages in the situation of the Catholics in these countries, to those which Protestants enjoy in any Catholic country on the globe, yet would I, by no means, be understood to object to that improvement in their condition which would be effected by the measure of emancipation. I am not indeed prepared to say that it would be advisable to adopt it just now, in the full extent that has been proposed. I am, however, satisfied that the time when it may be safely adopted is much nearer than would be believed by those who consider only the tone and the temper of Catholic meetings. These meetings, since the secession of the aristocracy, have become utterly unimportant. They afford no means whatever of judging of the improvement of the people at large. They indicate, merely, the very worst principles, which prevail amongst the very lowest of the Catholic body; but afford no means whatever of judging of the degree of loyalty and intelligence which is to be found, thank Heaven, in the country. I cannot better explain what I mean by separating the rabble from the people, than by observing, that the *former* have refused to entrust the presentation of their petition to Mr. Grattan; *would it be believed that the latter could have done so?* The shoe-blacks and the coal-porters of Dublin have declared Mr. Grattan unworthy of their confidence; is it to be supposed that the freeholders of that respectable city will, therefore, reject him as a candidate at their next election? Such an event is utterly incredible. We would do well, therefore, to attribute those other measures, which seem to emanate from the Catholic body, and which, likewise, bear the stamp of vulgarity and ignorance, to their proper cause; and not confound the talented and respectable portion of that sect, (who are really the most interested in the pursuit of constitutional liberty) with the conduct of persons who would be the very last to profit, (if indeed, they are at all capable of profiting) by the boon of emancipation.

It may be expected that in a publication like this, I should endeavour to give some description of that species of eloquence

which characterises the catholic orators; and the effect of which, indeed, on the character of the country has given rise to the preceding observations. This, however, will be no easy task. And if the character of the country was not, at every hazard, to be vindicated, exclusively of the difficulty of the undertaking, there would be insuperable objections to it, both on the score of reason and humanity. Reason might tell me that it would be as absurd to apply the principles of taste to the productions of such gentlemen as Mr. Phillips, as it would be to apply the principles of architecture to the houses that are erected by children on sand. And humanity might expect that I should behave on such an occasion with the philanthropic philosophy of my Uncle Toby; and dismiss the idle swarms, which have been quickened into existence by ardent politics, with the good natured observation with which he dismissed the insect which he detected so maliciously practising against the tranquillity of his nose. It is a subject which, really, one does not know how to treat seriously; and which cannot, because of its consequences, be treated with contempt. If the orators were understood to speak merely their own sentiments, and were not conceived to represent the learning and the intellect of the country, they never could provoke any acrimonious or vindictive criticism. But when their conduct has brought down the imputation of barbarity upon the nation at large, it is difficult not to regard them with sentiments very different, indeed, from such as would be most naturally excited by their personal importance. Good God! in what a state must that country be, which might be truly charged with all the folly and wickedness that may be gathered from the speeches of the catholic leaders? How deplorably destitute of political wisdom? How grossly deficient in good taste? How miserably backward in all those liberal pursuits, which in other countries constitute the embellishment of, *but which in this country must constitute the preparation for*, freedom? It is quite astonishing how the orators have contrived to exhibit, in the eloquence to which I allude, so great an assemblage of faults so heterogeneous. It is, at once, cold and incoherent; it is at once feeble and intemperate; it is at once redundant and obscure. It is exaggeratory, without being energetic. It is declamatory, without being animated. It is figurative, but its figures bear the same relation to genuine eloquence which the designs on China bowls do to excellent painting. In short, the genius of what has been denominated Irish oratory, is fitted neither for use nor ornament. Neither for enlivening what is commonplace, nor for illustrating what is profound. It exhibits not that power of bold and rapid delineation, nor that striking and decisive imagery, which we sometimes find, to so remarkable a degree,

amongst savage nations, any more than it displays the luminous arrangement, polished diction, and appropriate disposition of figures which can only be expected amongst the more refined; but consists altogether in a medley of incongruous metaphors, cold conceits, silly antitheses, and absurd allusions, the very least fault of which is that they are wholly devoid of grace or propriety; and which, both in their nature and effect, resemble those glaring, misty exhalations which sometimes draw the ignorant traveller out of his way, but which only serve to indicate, to the better informed, the coldness and barrenness of the regions by which they are surrounded.

It has often been said, that Mr. Burke was the orator whose example has given rise to that spurious kind of eloquence, which has been so common since his day. It cannot, indeed, be denied that that great man too often indulged in wild and irregular flights, which would be likely to mislead incautious readers. But he might say to his miserable followers, as the wealthy patrician said to his foolish client, when he wished to rival him in magnificent expence, "Noli imitari; Meæ opes stultitiam patiuntur; arctæ sanum comitem decent." Rich, indeed, were the stores of that genius from which he drew, with such unsparing prodigality, the treasures of wit and eloquence and philosophy; and not more abundant in vanity, than destitute of every requisite of real greatness must his wretched imitators be, if, instead of deriving any complacency from a comparison of themselves with such a man, they can see any thing but contrast, or feel any thing but humiliation. Since, however, a resemblance between the speeches of Mr. Burke and those of certain catholic orators has been much insisted on, I shall endeavour to sketch an outline of his political character, observing what I conceive to be its excellencies and its defects with impartiality and freedom.

Mr. Burke was a man who possessed a greater extent and variety of acquirements than, perhaps, any of his co-temporaries; but whose talents were by no means so much improved by cultivation as they might have been. He was a perfect Proteus in literature. He was a statesman, a critic, an orator, a philosopher. And though he attempted nothing in which he was not entitled to praise, yet he has been excelled by many in almost every thing which he attempted. Many men could be named who have arrived at greater eminence in the particular walks in which he occasionally appeared, by exclusive and unwearied application. But few have ever been found who were able to sustain so great a variety of such difficult characters in so distinguished a manner. With respect both to his oratory and his philosophy, it may be generally remarked, that he was more subtle than argumentative; more copious than forcible. And yet his subtlety was unpremedi-

tated; and his superfluity, rather the refining of a metaphysical mind, than the overflowing of an exuberant imagination. The strength of his understanding, and the excursive keenness of his observation led him, almost instinctively, to the adoption of those wise maxims of policy, which other minds might vainly toil for through tedious processes of abstract reasoning. But the quickness of his apprehension and the fertility of his invention often diverted him from that patient and cautious scrutiny, by which alone a philosopher can ever hope to attain a thorough investigation of general principles. His oratory, instead of exhibiting the classical correctness and the regulated ardour of an elegant and cultivated mind, rather displays the buoyant spirit and the intractable energy of a great and commanding Genius. And his philosophy, though bearing evident marks of the same superior intellect, must, nevertheless, be acknowledged to be less the result of profound and scientific research, than the desultory gleaning of a liberal, but unsteady curiosity.

But though neither the writings nor speeches of Mr. Burke will stand the test of time, yet were they both eminently calculated to be useful at the period when they were spoken and published. He lived in eventful times. He lived at a period when a taste for literature was diffusing itself through all ranks of men; and when the human mind was beginning to awaken from the torpor of centuries, and to be sensible of the rapid and fatal degeneracy of existing governments. Those alone, who lived in these times, can adequately picture to themselves the perils to which civilized society stood exposed, from the reaction of the principles on which it had so long proceeded. The populace were seized with a rage for legislation. And because the unsuitableness or absurdity of many existing establishments was perceived, incendiaries indulged in the most demoniac ravings against every thing which rested on ancient foundations. Kings were tyrants; Priests, deceivers; Religion was a mockery; and the worship of the LIVING GOD was regarded as an idle superstition, unworthy the dignity of creatures who had been favoured with the light of reason. Every thing solemn, every thing sacred, was ridiculed and despised. To feel a reverence for the venerable establishments, which stood a test and a memorial of the wisdom of antiquity, was regarded as a vulgar prejudice, which should be scouted by every lover of freedom. And to entertain any sentiments of aversion for the atrocious violence with which all schemes of reform were prosecuted, and the horrid and sanguinary proceedings of those who undertook the work of popular legislation, was to be totally devoid of that liberality, which was to effect the redemption and enlightenment of mankind. Such was the period during which Mr. Burke lived; and such were the feelings and such the principles against

which he had to exert his energies. Had he reasoned coldly on the nature of government, even though possessed of the sagacity of Aristotle, and the moral elevation of Plato, under such circumstances he could have effected nothing. Amid the deafening uproar of the times, he might have talked for ever without being heard, in the soft and gentle accents of philosophy. His reasonings might, indeed, remain for the instruction of after ages: and he would, no doubt, have left behind him a more imperishable memorial of his fame. But they would have profited little to allay the tumults by which they were occasioned; and government might be a wreck, and society a desert, before the desolating ravages of the innovator could be arrested in their destructive course, by the cautious and sober deductions of dispassionate argument. His mode of proceeding was, therefore, providentially ordered otherwise. He did not address himself to the reason merely; he seized upon the passions of the people. He exposed the folly and denounced the wickedness of the revolutionary principles, which were abroad, with such keenness of sarcasm and severity of invective as effectually roused the most thoughtless to a more attentive consideration of their consequences. He represented the actual misery which resulted from them in such lively and glowing colours as excited every generous sympathy, and interested every friend of humanity in effecting their renunciation. And by a bold and splendid, but inaccurate and fanciful portraiture of the advantages of regular government, and of the principles on which it depends, he contrived to give a degree of interest even to the venerable usages of antiquity, which diminished, in some measure, the ferocity with which they were assailed; and threw such a lustre around existing establishments, as effectually protected them against the empyricism of modern legislation.

Thus did this great man oppose himself, with the energy of one inspired, to the first fervours of revolutionary zeal, at a time when even upright and virtuous characters were dazzled by the prospects of happiness and liberty which were so confidently anticipated by visionary reformers. Is it necessary to offer any further considerations to show the full contrast in which he stands to our catholic agitators; whose conduct has been equally devoid of patriotism and policy; whose attachment to exploded principles has been persevered in to a degree of infatuation; and who have been as indefatigable in their endeavours to rouse up and to exasperate every bad passion against their country and their cause, as wise and discreet men would be to soothe and to allay them? It is, however, consolatory to perceive how rapidly the authority of these men has diminished of late; and how, in proportion as they became talentless and mischievous, they ceased to be respectable or important. The public mind has been greatly enlightened since

Burke's day. The deleterious politics by which even the better sort of people were intoxicated, about that time, are now confined to the lower orders: and although this is an evil, so far as it extends, it is not one so intimately affecting the frame and the structure of civil society. It is a disease which will, ultimately, effect its own cure; and of which it would be preposterous to anticipate the natural remedy. Let the work of education, on a liberal scale, go on. Let the people be supplied with moral and religious instruction, and legislators may confidently trust to the result. Nor even if measures of this kind should be productive of a little disorder, are they on that account to be abandoned. It is natural to expect that the diffusion of knowledge will, at first, give rise to a temporary turbulence. But it is equally natural to expect that this will rapidly subside, and be succeeded by more tranquil and liberal feelings. Besides, this turbulence cannot be prevented unless we would have society retrograde, or were able to keep it stationary. It is the *necessary* consequence of *a certain degree* of improvement: and unless we could prevent society from ever arriving at that, it would be idle to expect an exemption from the evils by which certain stages of its progressive state are naturally attended. These evils may sometimes appear extremely formidable in their nature; and far from intimating the improvement, seem to threaten the dissolution of society. But such appearances are generally contradicted by the event. For even when the visitations of popular phrenzy have been most severe, they but resemble the inundations of the Nile, which are the immediate causes of desolation, but the remote ones of fertility. And all that the statesman has to do, is to take care, like the Egyptian husbandman, that they do as little mischief as possible in their approach; whilst he is prepared to take advantage of the treasures which are deposited at their departure.

As yet the intemperance of the agitators has been considered only as it affected their own cause. I would not, however, be understood to lament that that cause has hitherto been unsuccessful. On the contrary it appears to me extremely probable that, if it had been successful twenty years ago, the connection of the countries would have been endangered. Those, therefore, who value British connection will not lament that an event has been retarded, which might have hazarded its continuance: especially, if there was a reasonable prospect that this event would, in the ordinary course of things, take place at a time when the people should be more fully capable of profiting by it. I do not pretend to say that that time is not at present very near. But if Emancipation would have had the effect of allaying the religious animosities which existed before and during the last rebellion, I fear that that distressing period would have been distinguished by a much more stubborn and

outrageous spirit of insubordination even than unhappily appeared; and that a unanimity would have prevailed amongst parties, who were separated by their religious sentiments, which would have rendered their hostility to the last degree formidable, and have probably terminated in reducing this country to a dependance on France. Under such a persuasion, therefore, I rejoice that religious distinction has been a means of keeping parties in this country divided, whose union might have been productive of consequences much more to be deplored. Nor can I believe that emancipation would have been a blessing, (no matter how it might have, otherwise, improved the condition of the disfranchised class,) if it had the smallest tendency to the dismemberment of the empire. At present the progress of improvement has wrought a great reformation on a large class of persons, who would have been formerly no wise indisposed to abet a struggle for separate existence. And the friends of British connection amongst the Catholics have, of late years, grown so rapidly in numbers and respectability, that it might be highly adviseable to repeal those statutes to the severity of which they are at present exposed. This, however, is a question which I will not, at present, discuss. Suffice it to say that the most material obstruction which the catholic cause has latterly met with, has arisen from the intemperance of the catholic leaders. We have seen how completely this intemperance is calculated to defeat its own ends. It may be interesting to enquire whether it may not be subservient to more extensive and more enlightened purposes; and whether it may not constitute, under the direction of providence, a beautiful provision for future improvement.

When Burke was led, by his ardent mind, to oppose himself to the revolutionists, the prevalence of bad principles in these countries was such as required the most prompt and energetic resistance. They were, at that time, novel and imposing; and could have been effectually subdued by nothing short of the vigour and ability with which they were encountered. But when their consequences were more fully seen, and men had time to reason more coolly about them, they went rapidly out of fashion. They continued, indeed, to be still received by the thoughtless and dissolute; but were rejected by the generality of those who had any property or stake in the country. It did not, therefore, require that much of legislative mind should be any longer diverted to the purposes of reprobating their vileness, or of exposing their futility. This had already been sufficiently done. They had been dislodged from all their strong holds, and could no longer be considered dangerous to the security of the empire. And when the illustrious senator last mentioned had succeeded in putting his countrymen on their guard against the evils to be apprehended from sudden and precipitate reform, if pushed to the extent that had been proposed, the nation

was restored to a degree of quiet which it had long ceased to enjoy; and the talents and learning of eminent men were attracted to objects of more permanent utility. After the general and indignant rejection of erroneous and profligate opinions of government, it was natural that men should be led to more correct and wholesome ideas on that subject. I mean, of course, that class of men whose situation and habits had qualified them for liberal enquiry. We shall find, accordingly, that subsequent events had a constant tendency to rouse the curiosity, and interest the feelings of the better sort of persons, whilst they were at the same time calculated to give a peaceful and sober turn to their political studies, and to determine them against engaging in public concerns with clamour or violence.

It may seem strange to some that a period of our history should be described as peculiarly the era of sober and rational political discussion, which has abounded more, perhaps, than any other, with arrogant and overweening politicians, and ignorant and vapid declaimers. Was there ever, it will be said, a time in which the most worthless demagogue could more easily excite a prejudice against the measures of government; or in which so small a share of talent or address was necessary to impose upon the people? Was there ever a period in which the wildest schemes of every idle speculator were more eagerly received; or in which the most contradictory absurdities have been more confidently and successfully repeated? Was there ever a period in which party-zeal was more regardless of appearances; in which popular advocates appeared not only having so little pretension to learning or ability, but so little pretending to spirit or honesty; in whom the furious prosecution of some foolish or pernicious measure has been considered equivalent to virtue, talent, and accomplishments? All this may be very true, but the objector should consider what effect it must have on the upper and middle ranks of society; and whether this effect may not be directly the contrary to that which it is calculated to produce on the lower orders. Let him consider whether the clamour and folly with which certain pernicious measures have been prosecuted of late, have engaged many of the more sober and reflecting part of the community on their behalf; or whether the peaceable and enlightened have not been prejudiced against such measures, precisely in proportion to the uproar and outrage by which they were recommended. The Spartans, we are told, were accustomed on certain occasions, to make their slaves drunk, in order to expose to their children the odious and contemptible condition to which men were reduced by intoxication. An effect precisely similar has been produced by noisy and unenlightened agitators, upon the sober and thinking part of the people. Political fanaticism has been checked by the very excesses of its

own extravagance; and the doctrines of liberty and equality were never less likely to attract the favour of the liberal and educated, than when they were producing their most violent effects on their sanguine and inconsiderate supporters. The wisdom and expediency of certain plans of *radical* reform, as it has been called, are not likely to be felt by the generality of those who know how delicate and how complicated a thing the machine of government is, and who perceive the temerity and intemperance of the projectors. And, how much soever the political discussions which have taken place may have discovered the imperfections, or exposed the abuses of the present order of things, the insolence and dogmatism of declaimers on this subject have contributed more, perhaps, than any thing else, to protect the country from a remedy which would have been worse than the disease; because, under pretence of removing causes of grievance, it would have effected a sudden and a violent alteration in the balance of the constitution. Besides, we must consider that if men of mean talents and scanty information had not come forward and obtruded themselves on the public, other more respectable and more enlightened persons would have arisen, who might ensure to measures, equally pernicious, a greater degree of success, by a more imposing and circumspect conduct. Witness the effect which was produced by the able men who figured in the political world before and during the great rebellion. The success which attended the exertions of Pym and Hampden was no doubt partly owing to the ignorance of the times; but it is also in a great measure ascribable to the energy and ability of these distinguished popular leaders. It is not likely that, at the present day, precisely the same effects could be produced by the exertions of even the most talented agitators. But many measures might be precipitated for which the country is by no means prepared; and time would be lost, and talents wasted in abortive attempts to anticipate that excellence which can only be produced gradually, and after a lapse of ages.—But, it may be supposed, without the examples of base and unworthy demagogues before their eyes, men of intellect and information would stand sufficiently aloof from any sordid communion with the vulgar. This might, probably, be the case with men of *very* refined taste, and *very* superior intellect. But under a government such as ours persons will never be wanted to take advantage of the opportunity so frequently afforded of addressing public meetings: and many truly respectable and enlightened men are only prevented from squandering their talents and character in this way, by the success which they see equally to attend the exertions of those with whom they would disdain to act, and consider it humiliating to be connected. The real value of what is called popular opinion is thus unequivocally manifested; and they are determined to a sober and peaceful prosecution of those political stu-

ties, which, if they had once engaged in faction, they would never have pursued to a greater extent than might be necessary for some party purpose. Look around amongst your educated friends, and say, are many of them imposed on by the pretensions of the present unworthy candidates for popular favor? Examine them more closely and say, has their perception of the folly and indiscretion with which many popular measures have been pursued of late been unattended with that degree of reflection which would render their notions on political subjects more clear and enlightened? I fancy in the majority of cases you will find that it has not: and that not merely their opinions of men and measures have been corrected by experience, but that they have acquired an extent of knowledge, and a habit of thinking by which their *mode* of judging on these important subjects has been sensibly improved. If this be so, ought we not to rejoice, that the ignorant intemperance of agitators has been the cause of the improvement of better men; and that the temporary disturbance to which the demagogue is accessary, amongst the lower orders, should be so amply compensated by the permanent good which is thereby derived to the more educated classes of society?

Nor should we, in enumerating the benefits of which the illiberal agitator is the unconscious instrument, omit the mention of effects, less perceivable, indeed, in their nature, but by no means less important or interesting, which are produced on that class of persons who are more peculiarly obnoxious to the influence of a seditious eloquence. They are called to pursuits more purely intellectual than any in which they had previously engaged; and though the species of entertainment with which they are provided may not possess very many charms for the educated and well informed, yet is it not without very peculiar attractions for those whose opportunities of improvement have been more circumscribed. To exercise the privilege of denouncing ministers, exclaiming against public measures, clamouring for reform, &c. &c. is a powerful means of exciting a public interest on occasions when a cold and a criminal apathy might otherwise creep upon a nation. And although at first view we are apt to be offended at the ignorance, the intemperance, or the wickedness of those who take advantage of such occasions only to inflame the passions, or abuse the honest simplicity of the people; yet as there is quite a sufficient provision made against any mischief which could arise from this source in the enlightened and constitutional feeling of the middle and upper ranks, it may not be inexpedient that the lower orders should be acted upon in such a way, as by interesting their passions, and flattering their vanity, calls forth those displays of public spirit, which give a peculiar tone of energy to their thoughts, and a degree of liberality to their sentiments not usually found compatible with their mode of existence.

It is not wise to object to public meetings because they do not often give rise to very grand or philosophical systems of policy. Such is not their proper object. It is sufficient if they keep the public mind alive to subjects of public concern; and operate as a check on the measures of those who are entrusted with the administration. If I were asked to shew, by any instance, the good effects of such meetings, I could not do so more completely than by pointing out the difference between the British tradesman, and the abject, crouching slave who is accustomed to kiss the rod of a despotic government. All the strength, all the boldness, all the erectness which we admire in the character of the former, is attributable, chiefly, to the peculiar modification of the liberty which he enjoys. All the feebleness, all the timidity, all the prostration which we despise in the conduct of the latter, is, in like manner, to be traced to the debasing influence of the government under which he lives, or rather under which he is permitted to drag an existence. There may, no doubt, be cases in which it might be necessary to withhold from the lower orders any, even the smallest share, of political power. But let any circumstances render it expedient to invest them with constitutional privileges, and see how rapidly their condition will be improved. The man who before never even ventured to think of remonstrating against the measures of his government, suddenly experiences a kind of political regeneration. He is stirred up from the torpid inactivity in which he was contented to remain whilst he was unconscious of his importance in the community; and induced to exert a degree of moral energy, by which his character is vindicated and his liberty secured. The *personal* interest which he feels in public concerns, leads him into enquiries which never before possessed a sufficient degree of *abstract* interest to excite his attention. And though his views may not be the wisest, nor his conclusions the justest; yet his faculties are awakened, his information is increased, his talents are exercised; and he is, on the whole, a much more improved being than he would have been had he never been raised up from the slime of his original abasement.

The truth is there are no promiscuous assemblies for which I have a greater respect than for our own, *if considered as mob-meetings*. Compare the people, by whom they are composed, with a French, or a Spanish, or an Italian populace, and they will be found to be greatly superior. But to think of being guided by their decisions on subjects of great legislative concern, would surely argue a degree of fatuity for which statesmen would not easily stand excused. I am satisfied that the poor people themselves, if they were seriously apprehensive that their ideas on political subjects were to regulate the national councils, would be startled at the perils to which their ignorance and indiscretion must expose the country, and seek relief, even in an absolute sover-

eignty, from the responsibility which must press so heavily upon them.

I have, perhaps, dwelt longer on this subject than will be considered necessary. I hope, however, to stand excused from its superior interest and importance. Indeed the most satisfactory answer which can be given to the imputation of disloyalty, to which the folly and intemperance of Catholic agitators is likely to expose this country, must be drawn from the reaction which the conduct of these absurd and mischievous men has produced amongst the sober and intelligent part of the people. I am persuaded that many educated and respectable persons, who, before these men assumed any importance, would be far from being violent in their opposition to measures of a very dangerous and unconstitutional tendency, are now amongst the very last to approve of the base adulation which is lavished on the poor misguided mob, or the vulgar and contemptible calumnies which are circulated against the administration. Indeed a man in moderate circumstances must be strangely ignorant not to know how very little calculated a promiscuous assembly, of the very lowest orders, is to decide upon profound views of policy, intricate questions of political economy, hazardous projects of reform, and the miscellany of important and difficult topics which are submitted to their judgment in debate. And to ascribe any honest motives to those who tell the poor people that they are not only fitted for such a task, but that it is their peculiar province, and that their decisions should control the determinations of Parliament, would argue a degree of charity almost bordering on infatuation. To abet, therefore, any schemes, which on pretence of recovering popular rights, or diminishing the influence of the crown, would virtually deprive the educated and intellectual part of the community of that ascendency which they at present possess in all public deliberations, can never be the part of a wise and virtuous citizen, who knows and values rational freedom. Accordingly, in proportion as the agitators have increased in clamour, and risen in their demands, in the same proportion has the determination arisen in the wise and virtuous to resist them. And no where has this enlightened sentiment been more operative than in this country; where the demagogues are beginning to be heartily sorry for the violent measures into which they have been betrayed, and to be anxious for an opportunity of retracting without the appearance of inconsistency or vacillation. Indeed it seems to argue a degree of respectability which I would not lightly attribute to these men, that they seem at length sensible that the shout of a mob is but a poor recompense for the hatred and contempt with which they are almost universally regarded. But as no people in the world would be more mis-

understood than the Irish, if they were supposed to be fairly represented by the number of empty, hollow-hearted swaggerers who have occasionally been popular amongst them, I shall conclude with a few observations on their national character; in which, if the reader should discover the influence of a natural prejudice in favour of my countrymen, I hope he will also perceive an endeavour, at least, at coolness and impartiality, which has not been wholly without success.

Although many have treated largely of the character of Irishmen as individuals, few have been at sufficient pains to point out those traits by which they are distinguished as a people. They have been either lauded with a fulsome adulation, in which every thing heroic and amiable has been attributed to them, or else condemned with an unwarrantable severity, and their very virtues made the evidences of their barbarism. A calm and dispassionate survey of their condition and policy, however, will satisfy the impartial observer that much must be detracted from the praise, and much abated from the censure of the undiscerning and prejudiced on both sides: and the Irish will be found to be a people, the leading characteristic of whom is, a kindness and benignity of disposition, the most disinterested, perhaps, that has ever been recorded as distinguishing a nation. To this must be added, a species of archness and pleasantry peculiarly their own. Not the fescinine ribaldry which Horace condemns, not the mischievous buffoonery which arises out of excess of animal spirits in our politer neighbours, but the easy, natural, spontaneous production of a lively imagination, and an affectionate heart. These qualities, enviable and estimable as they must be allowed to be, are not, however, unattended by others of a less desirable kind. Hospitality, generosity, humanity, are virtues which few will deny to the Irish, but they cannot be said to be endued, in the same degree, with prudence, steadiness, discrimination. Their good sense is too liable to be obscured by the mists of prejudice, and their judgment to be deceived by the illusions of fancy; and this is the more to be lamented in their case, because, of all nations, they are the most difficult to be disabused of their errors, when these once become interwoven with cherished and favorite associations. Their attachment to the superstition, which at present prevails amongst them, is less attributable, it will be easily admitted, to any profound acquaintance with the controversies which have arisen on the subject, than to the venerable names, and the interesting circumstances with which their remembrances of that ancient faith are connected. And many political antipathies which at present exist, and which, in some instances, ope-

rate with a degree of violence that looks almost like derangement, far from being produced by any policy which is pursued at the present day, owe their origin and their strength to times and to circumstances, the traditionary recollection of which has been preserved amongst them, embellished and exaggerated of course by fancy and by fiction. Here it may not be improper to notice a difference which is observable between the political character of the English, and that of the Irish; the former are usually animated to oppose their government *by general ideas addressed to the understanding;* the latter, *by particular pictures presented to the imagination.* The English are patriotic, as it is called, from their detestation of tyranny, their horror of popery, their apprehensions of arbitrary power; the Irish, because of some lively description of particular oppression, or some pathetic representation of individual distress; by which their hearts are touched, and their fancies interested. I do not mean to insinuate that the one are not influenced by general reasoning in their politics, or that the other are not susceptible of an appeal to their passions. But only that the exciting influences, *in the first instance*, usually are in the one case of the imaginative, in the other, of the discursive kind: and after these have produced their effects, the reason or the fancy may in both cases be employed to aid the impression. But it would be very hard to enlist the fancy of an English populace on one side of a question, when their understandings leaned to the other; or, vice versa, the reason of an Irish populace, after their imaginations had been preoccupied by the nature of the subject, or the address of the speaker. To this difference in the characters of the two nations may be attributed much of the diversity which is to be found in their public conduct; the one, being influenced by some general impression, which is constant, uniform, and definite, usually pursue their designs with steadiness, unanimity, and perseverance; the other are as wavering and unsteady in their politics, as the influence to which they are exposed is capricious; and seldom, in the prosecution even of the greatest designs, exhibit any remarkable instance of concert or arrangement. But although the Irish are by no means a very profoundly thoughtful, they are not an undiscerning people. They are always able to perceive differences, although they seldom very accurately mark distinctions; and are possessed of a kind of native shrewdness which supplies the place of the reasoning faculty in all the ordinary business of life. Their readiness at repartee has been remarked by every one: and although I am disposed to think that they possess some natural advantages in this respect over the sober English, much of their superiority, I am persuaded, arises from the

practice of putting their ingenuity to various uses, which has not been as yet superseded in this country by any very minute subdivision of labour. They are wonderfully quick in their observation of character: and though rarely possessed of that foresight and steadiness which would preserve them in an even and prosperous course in the world, they often exhibit an extraordinary degree of adroitness and dexterity in extricating themselves out of any difficulties in which they may be involved. They are, besides, naturally of a cheerful contented disposition, and bear up under misfortunes with singular fortitude, which, indeed, may be one reason why they so seldom provide against them with sufficient precaution. It is hard to be severe on the vices of a people who have been governed like the Irish. Where a vindictive and suspicious policy has been pursued, a generous and affectionate loyalty could not have been expected. I am far from thinking that this would have been the consequence of the mild and conciliatory system which the patriots in the Irish parliament so strongly recommended. But it clearly could not have been the consequence of the system which has been pursued. And those who could not be expected to perceive that the salutary restraint to which they were subjected, was perhaps the only means of preserving the connection of the countries, or to see even in that connection any thing very advantageous to Ireland, could hardly be expected to acquiesce very peaceably in the disabilities to which they were exposed, or prevented from breaking out into outrage and violence by the harshness and jealousy with which they were regarded. Accordingly, the country has been disgraced by many acts of flagrant outrage, which have proceeded less from a cruel or malignant disposition, than from the unhappy political animosities which have so long divided the people. The pride of the Irish is greatly offended by a consciousness of inferiority to their protestant fellow subjects, and this often begets an angry spirit of retaliation, which but too well supplies the place of innate malice and cruelty. To conclude, the virtues of the Irish are entirely their own, their vices proceed in a great measure from the accidents of their situation. And those who can truly appreciate the disinterested friendship, the heroic bravery, the generous self-devotion, the lively gratitude, the kindly warmth, the affectionate hospitality of which they are capable, will easily forgive them if ignorance, bigotry, vile and factious leaders, and a government but too commonly negligent and ill-informed, have led them into any very fatal mistakes, or given any disorderly bias to their hearts or their understandings.

It would be invidious to conclude without noticing the high claims which the present Irish administration have, on the grati-

tude of every virtuous subject, for the mild, but resolute policy by which they have been enabled so effectually to counteract all the efforts of the intemperate and the disaffected. I will venture to say, that there has seldom been in this country a government so deservedly, or so universally popular. And I mention this as a fact not reflecting more credit on the illustrious individuals composing the government, than affording a complete answer to all insinuations that may be thrown out against the loyalty of the people. The calm, and dignified, and equitable tenor of his Excellency Lord Whitworth's conduct, cannot be sufficiently admired. He seems to act with a perfect knowledge of the state of the country, and insight into the character of the people. He unites prudence with liberality; blends coolness with spirit; and combines firmness with conciliation. He knows how (which, in politics, argues no small skill) to distinguish between the rule and the exception. There is nothing little, nothing pedantic, in his policy. His measures are all on a large scale. He can overlook, with a lofty composure, the petty provocations of shallow and impotent demagogues, whose ephemeral existence would only be prolonged by any vindictive animadversion. And even when the outrages of a disorderly peasantry seemed to call for the severest chastisement, he so executed judgment as to remember mercy. He contrived to aid the operation, without superseding the clemency of law; and to temper the severity, without impairing the vigour of justice. As nothing is more rare in this country than a wise moderation, in the management of its political concerns, I thought it right to allude to the general feeling which is entertained towards Lord Whitworth's government, if it was only to shew how far we are from being ungrateful for the gracious and parental, and, at the same time, steady and uncompromising exercise of his high powers, by which he is so eminently calculated to preside, with advantage, over the interests of Ireland.

ON THE SUPPLY OF EMPLOYMENT AND SUBSISTENCE FOR THE LABOURING CLASSES,

IN

FISHERIES, MANUFACTURES, AND THE CULTIVATION OF WASTE LANDS;

WITH

REMARKS ON THE OPERATION OF THE

Salt Duties,

AND A PROPOSAL FOR THEIR REPEAL.

ADDRESSED TO THE

RIGHT HON. NICHOLAS VANSITTART.

BY

SIR THOMAS BERNARD, BART.

LONDON:

1817.

A LETTER, &c.

THE PROVIDING of new and adequate sources of healthful and beneficial employment for a numerous and increasing population, is at present the general and important object of the public attention. After the arduous and successful contest for the liberty and independence of Europe, in which we have persevered for above twenty years, we now find other indispensable duties, which call for our exertions. We have to supply means of occupation and subsistence for those, to whom not only England, but Europe is so deeply indebted; the duty and difficulty of which are increased in proportion to the immense numbers which we have enrolled by sea and land, and to the distinguished part which we have taken in restoring to the civilized world the blessings of social order and civil government. At the same time, many of the labouring poor, by a concurrence of unprecedented circumstances, have been deprived of their ordinary means of labour. In our efforts, however, for the relief of our fellow subjects, it is no small encouragement to reflect that, during a sanguinary contest of more than twenty years, in which some of the fairest portions of the habitable world have been desolated and laid waste,—our population has been gradually increasing,—our internal improvements have advanced without interruption,—our commerce and manufactures have been more than doubled,—above three millions [1] of unproductive acres have been brought into cultivation, and an increasing surplus of more than fourteen millions a year has been exclusively and, I trust, inalienably appropriated towards the reduction of our national debt. With these advantages, indeed, it would be the excess of weakness and cowardice, to despair of providing an

[1] Chalmers' State of the United Kingdom at the Peace of Paris.

adequate remedy for our present inconveniences,—by opening new sources of occupation in our fisheries, agriculture, manufactures and commerce; so as not only to provide employment and subsistence for our brave sailors and soldiers, but at the same time to afford relief to others of the labouring class, under difficulties and distresses, which by some have been imputed to renewed PEACE and PLENTY, but may be attributed to other and very different causes, which I shall endeavour to explain.

In an age like the present, fruitful in scheme and enterprize, rival banks had been set up in country towns and villages, by petty tradesmen with little credit and no capital. In order to circulate their paper, these new bankers dealt in corn and other articles of life, and advanced their paper to others for the same purpose, with the noxious effect of raising the markets, and producing a kind of temporary scarcity.[1] Taking advantage of this increased price of the produce of the soil, a knavish race of *landvaluers* impressed the mind of the landowner with chimerical ideas[2] of the value of real property, and induced him to set the rent of his land far above its intrinsic worth.—A favourable harvest, however, blighted all their hopes; and the price of corn was gradually returning to its natural level, when the guilt, the impatience, and the mutual distrust of these monopolists, glutted and depressed the markets,—and a general alarm, the failure of bankers, the insolvency of tenants, and the distress of landlords, were the necessary and immediate consequences. The pecuniary distress which has very generally followed those failures, weakened the spirit of commercial enterprize, stopped some of our public works, checked the improvements of private property, and lessened the demand for labor throughout the United Kingdom,—just at the time when the restoration of peace occasioned the discharge of the immense numbers of laboring men, engaged in the sea and land service, and in the various departments subservient to or connected with it. This is a situation of extraordinary difficulty, requiring the greatest degree of abilities and attention in Government, to cope with; and it is a very fortunate circumstance for this country, that at such

[1] This subject is ably treated in the British Review of August 1816.

[2] The madness of high rents and of high prices became as epidemical, as it formerly was in the South Sea year. When the *Village Banker* had made his agreement for granaries of wheat and barley, or for estates in lands and mines, he scorned to shrink from his bargain, however improvident it might appear. He only set to work with his clerk, to fabricate more notes, to pay for his purchase; as Swift's madman, when he had made his ten notches on his skewer, threw it on the table,

"Shall I, ye Gods (he cries) my debts compound?
There, take my tally for ten thousand pound."

a crisis, we have a strong and efficient administration, competent to contend with the difficulties that surround them.

As the evil is not local or temporary, the remedy must not only be general in its effect, but permanent in its duration. Except the greater evil of the renewal of the horrors of war, no measure seems adequate to the object, without the removal of every existing obstacle and impediment to the employment of the labouring class; so as to augment the call for manual labour, in *Agriculture*, *Fisheries*, and *Manufactures*; and particularly by the cultivation of our WASTE LANDS and the extension of our FISHERIES, to provide new sources of acceptable occupation. Looking to this object, it appears to me, and I shall endeavour to prove, that there is no obstacle or impediment, that operates so generally and fatally against the increase of employment for the laboring class, in these and many other respects as the existence of the SALT DUTIES.

There is hardly to be found in the infinite variety of created matter, any thing more valuable, or more generally applicable to use, than COMMON SALT. Composed of two deleterious materials, *chlorine* and *sodium*,—the united substance is more beneficial and salubrious, than it is in the power of our limited modes of reasoning to comprehend. Every accession of knowledge discovers new benefits and uses in it. Its spirit is diffused over the boundless ocean. It gives health and purity to the mass of waters, and to the inhabitants of the deep abyss. It preserves every species of food for the use of man; renews the exhausted soil and restores its fertility; and is healthful and acceptable to every kind of animal. In respect of this important and necessary article of life, England has been peculiarly fortunate. Her brine springs are rich and abundant; and, what is extraordinary, are stronger in proportion as they are more and more worked by the pump. A gallon of brine will yield above two pounds and a half of solid salt; whilst those foreign springs, which are the subject of the French report in 1786, are not of half the strength of the brine springs in the county of Chester. Add to this, that the waters which wash the bays and inlets of our coasts, are capable of producing an inexhaustible supply of salt; and that the subterraneous treasures of coal that abound in every part of our Island, afford means, which no other country possesses, of purifying and crystallizing it for our own use, for the extension of our commerce, and for the supply of the world. No country indeed has been in this respect more favoured, except so far as like the wand of Sancho's physician) the arm of Government is extended to prevent our free enjoyment of the bounty of Providence.

In preparing the salt from the brine, there is a refuse part, which is formed by the separation and decomposition of the gros-

ser particles from the pure salt. This is cleared out from the pans and thrown on the ground, to the amount of several bushels [1] at each boiling. Before the excessive increase of the duties (which now are thirty pounds on a ton of salt, the original value of which is about fifteen shillings) the salt proprietors were allowed to dispose of this *refuse salt* to the farmers; who knew the value of it as a manure, and (however inferior it might be to pure salt) were very glad to purchase as much as they could get of it, at twenty-five shillings a ton; half of which went as a duty to Government, and the rest was a clear gain to the salt proprietor. The late Lord Coventry used to have a regular supply of this manure, sent from Droitwich to his place at Crome Court; the excise officer attending to see it moved and laid on the land, and receiving a compliment for his extra attendance. The quantity of this manure, which was at one time sold at Northwich alone, to the farmers of that neighbourhood, amounted, as we are informed by Bishop Watson, to near 120,000 bushels annually. This was a very considerable boon to agriculture, and an equal advantage to the salt proprietor and to Government in respect of the duty it paid. But when the duties on salt were still more increased, the disposal of this refuse salt was prohibited, to the great regret of the farmers;—the country was deprived of the benefit of a cheap and rich manure,—and the whole of this *refuse salt* is now, under a relentless order, carefully swept up by the proprietor's labourers in the exciseman's presence, and thrown into the river.

In order to promote and encourage the improvement of waste lands, as an additional source of occupation for the disbanded veteran and unemployed labourer, no measure can be proposed so desirable or effectual, as the removal of the impediments that arise from the duties on salt; the use of which in agriculture, is now prohibited by a tax of forty times the value of the article. The supply of means for bringing the soil *immediately and with little expense* into produce, affords the best and most effectual encouragement and incitement to the cultivation of waste and

[1] In his agricultural Survey of Cheshire, (p. 238.) Mr. Holland notices an experiment made with this *refuse salt*, where it was spread in the middle of October on a piece of *sour rushy ground*, after the rate of *eight* bushels to the acre, and in another part *sixteen* bushels. In a short time the vegetation disappeared totally, and during the month of April following, not a blade of grass was to be seen. In the latter end of the month of May a most flourishing crop of rich grass made its appearance on that part where the eight bushels had been laid. In the month of July, the other portion produced a still stronger crop: the cattle were remarkably fond of it, and during the whole ensuing winter, and for several years, the land retained, and yet exhibits, a superior verdure to the neighbouring closes.

unprofitable lands.' It is thus that the introduction of LIME into our list of *manures*, has produced in the course of the last thirty years, the most beneficial and extraordinary effects in this country, by reclaiming millions of acres, hitherto deemed uncultivable. The vicinity of a lime quarry, or the power of communicating with one by water carriage, is marked in every part of England by improved cultivation and increased fertility:—yet lime is not so *cheap*, nor so *powerful*, nor so *universal* a manure as SALT. Lime must be applied in much larger quantities;[2] the carriage is much more expensive, and there are many parts of England, where it cannot be had at a price to answer for the husbandman. But SALT, *duty free*, is a great deal cheaper, and (as far as experiments have gone)[3] very superior in power and permanency of effect;

[2] Mr. Holland has also recorded an Experiment made on a meadow, where the after grass was of so coarse and rank a nature that the cattle would not eat it; but upon some salt being laid upon a part of this meadow, they have ever since preferred the grass growing on that ground, to every other part of the field and eaten up every blade. "The good effects of salt (he adds) are also seen by mixing it even with the coarsest manure. A gentleman lately carried a small quantity of couch grass roots and other rubbish, harrowed off his land, to the salt works, and laid it for some time upon the ground, where the foul salt by the direction of the officer is destroyed; he then carried it back, and mixed it with other manure. His barley and his hay grass were strong from this composition, beyond his most sanguine expectations. Its effects on fallow lands are equally advantageous; by sowing it at the time of breaking up the land for a fallow, its strong saline quality destroys vegetation, and every noxious insect; but by being mixed sufficiently with the soil, before the wheat is sown, it adds a strong nutriment, and insures the best of crops." *Holland's Agricultural Survey of Cheshire*, p. 237.

[3] In a periodical publication of March, 1802, is stated an experiment, to ascertain the comparative strength of salt and lime, as manures. A compost of *refuse salt* was mixed with the earth taken out of water furrows; and at the same time some lime was also mixed with a portion of the same earth. "They were each laid on different parts of the same field. That part of the field which had the lime compost laid upon it, vegetated strongly; but is bore no comparison to the health and vigour of the vegetation of the other part of the field, which had the compost with salt laid upon it; and, notwithstanding five years have elapsed, one may still trace by the quantity of grass thrown up, the extent to which the salt compost had been spread. Having had such strong proof of its good effect, he was induced to try another experiment with the salt. He, last spring, strewed a portion of land *pretty thickly* over with it, without any admixture of earth: the consequence has been, that he has not only not received the expected advantage, but vegetation has been destroyed, and the land is *for the present* almost bare."

To manure twenty acres of land with *lime*, where lime can be got, will require two hundred cart loads of lime, which, at only a shilling a load, will cost ten pounds; whilst twenty bushels of *salt*, at the expense of ten shillings, mixed up with three or four loads of loam or dirt, will answer the same purpose.

and it is to be easily obtained in all the remote and desert parts of the island, the expense of carriage being comparatively nothing. At the same time its powerful quality, and the extreme caution required in its application, have occasioned some doubts with regard to its use as a manure. It seems, however, invariably to have answered, when used in the very small quantity of a *bushel*[1] *to an acre*, and when used in too great abundance, to have been as destructive of vegetation, as it is friendly to it in small and carefully measured proportions. Bishop Watson accounts for these effects of salt, "when applied as a manure *in small quantities*, from its efficacy in reducing weeds, dried herbage, dead roots, &c. into a putrid, oily mass;"[2] and he goes on to observe, that when salt is used in a larger proportion, it preserves these matters from corruption, and the fertility of the ground is thereby diminished, or wholly destroyed. This may be confirmed and illustrated by reference to Sir John Pringle's Experiments,[3] which prove that *common salt* when used in small quantities accelerates the *putrefaction* of animal substances, but when used in larger quantities it retards it. Whatever may be the *physical* causes, it seems now to be practically ascertained, that *salt* used in *very*

[1] I mention *one bushel to an acre*, on the authority of a gentleman who made a series of experiments on salt as a manure, and held that the proportion of a bushel to an acre answered best, and made the land most productive. Different proportions, however, may suit different soils.

[2] Chemical Essays, vol. iii. p. 34.

[3] "Nothing could be more unexpected (says Sir John Pringle) than to find sea salt a hastener of putrefaction. But the fact is thus: one drachm of salt preserves two drachms of fresh beef, in two ounces of water, above 30 hours, uncorrupted, in a heat equal to that of the human body; or, what amounts to the same, this quantity of salt keeps fresh about 20 hours longer sweet, than pure water; but half a drachm of salt does not preserve it above two hours longer. This experiment has been already mentioned. Now I have since found that 25 grains have little or no *antiseptic* virtue, and that ten or fifteen, or even twenty grains, manifestly hath hasten and heighten the corruption. The most putrefying quantity of salt, with this proportion of salt and water, is about ten grains. It is moreover to be remarked, that in warm infusions with these smaller quantities, the salt, instead of hardening the flesh, as it does in a dry form in brine, or even in solutions, such as our standard, here softens and relaxes the texture of the meat, more than plain water; though much less than water with chalk, or the testaceous powders,—many inferences might be made from this experiment, but I shall only mention one. Salt, the indispensible seasoner of animal food, has been supposed to act by an *antiseptic* quality, correcting the too great tendency of meats to putrefaction: but since it is never taken in aliment beyond the proportion of the corrupting quantities in our experiment, it would appear that salt is subservient to digestion, chiefly by a *septic* virtue, that is, by softening and resolving meats; an action very different from what is commonly believed." *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. 46. p. 557.

small quantities, and mixed with loam or mould, is a valuable and powerful manure; but that in large quantities[1] it is pernicious. The fertilizing power of a *little salt* is alluded to in Scripture; where the extraordinary conversions, to be produced by a few illiterate disciples, are compared to the power of a small portion of salt to fertilize an extent of soil:—"ye are the salt of the earth."

The use of salt as a manure, however, if we were relieved from the duties, would not be confined to *waste lands*. The practice which existed a few years ago, of applying the *refuse salt* as a *manure*, would be renewed, and extended to every part of the kingdom. The farmer would also use the pure and marketable salt, the price of which would not be so much as he formerly paid for *refuse salt*. Applied in the small quantities I have mentioned, and especially when mixed in the compost dunghill,[2] salt is the best and the cheapest of all manures, that can be used in the courses of agriculture. Its value in preserving hay which has been exposed to wet, has been long known, though the salt duties have now in a great measure precluded the use of it.—There is a custom in Spain and Portugal, which I have personally witnessed the practice of in North America, of daily placing on stones in the sheep pastures, some dry salt for the use of the sheep. I have seen each of the sheep in his turn, and with eagerness, take a small portion of it. This is considered as a preservative against the *rot*, and as contributing to their general health and good condition.[3] It

[1] In the second volume of the Communications of the Board of Agriculture, there is a detail of some experiments made by Mr. Fenna on the use of salt for manure. As he used in some instances as much as fifteen bushels an acre, and on his general average nine bushels an acre, his experiments serve only to prove that *salt in large quantities is injurious to land*, and to offer a long and laborious commentary on the old adage of *ne quid nimis*.

[2] The fertilizing property of sea mud is well known.—In Holland's Survey of Cheshire (page 368) there is some account of its prolific effects. Manured with it, land (according to this account) yields of oats or barley, the first year, from 100 to 160 bushels per acre: planted with potatoes the second year, they seldom had less than 400 bushels an acre, 90 lbs. to the bushel; the third year as much wheat as could grow on the land; and the fourth year large crops of oats and clover, or barley and clover. The virtue of sea mud consists chiefly in the salt which it contains; and it seems very practicable, by mixing a proper proportion of *salt with common dirt or mould*, to produce a manure as effectual and beneficial as sea mud.

[3] In an address of a late President of the Board of Agriculture, Lord Somerville, his Lordship observes with regret, "that salt is not a component part of the food of stock, of sheep more particularly. How many diseases (he continues) arising from damp climate, from relaxation, and from rank green food, might it not subdue!—In Germany, salt is universally given to oxen and cows in a fatting state, and their improvement is proportionate to the quantity given. We are all sensible of the effect of salt on the human

is understood that a considerable part of the salt which we export, *duty free*, to America, is used for the purposes of agriculture; though by the time it reaches the American farmer, it costs him as much as two shillings and sixpence a bushel: and I have no doubt but in our humid and uncertain climate, and in the variety of our soils, it would *in small quantities* be found generally useful, in preserving our sheep from the *rot* and other complaints, hitherto deemed inevitable and incurable. In Spain the cows are regularly supplied with a little salt; and the increase of their milk, and the benefit which stable-fed cattle derive from it, are confirmed by many authorities.[1] A Cheshire gentleman informs me, that when he wants extraordinary exertion from his horses, he always gives them a little salt; and this is analogous to the practice in the East, where the camels are allowed salt during the passage of the Caravans over the Desert to Alexandria, as a support in the extreme fatigue which they undergo.

The advantage of augmenting the number of cultivated acres in this country, would certainly be of great use at present, and would have permanent effects on the increase of employment and subsistence in future. In many instances, however, legislative sanctions would be necessary, to enable the parties interested to proceed to *exclusive* cultivation: but in the millions of acres that sur-

body; we are told how unwholesome, we know how unpalatable, fresh meat and vegetables are without it. The ancients held it in the highest estimation, "*Omnis mensa male ponitur absque sale.*" We also know the avidity with which animals in a wild state, seek the salt-pans of Africa and America, and the difficulties they will encounter to reach them. Is it not notorious that hay, mouldy from rain, is rendered palatable, and infinitely nutritious to cattle, by simply strewing salt on the stack, at the rate of 10 or 15 lbs. per ton, when making? Equally notorious is it, that a sensible effect is hereby produced to the taste, that cattle will prefer it to better hay, well put together, and will demand, when fed on it, without injury to themselves, three times as much water; which circumstance alone, accounts for that aptitude to fatten, which is never denied to hay so salted. *Communications of the Board of Agriculture*, vol. ii. p. 471.

[1] In his Natural History, Pliny observes on the beneficial effects of salt, upon oxen, horses, and sheep; and also on its greatly increasing the quantity and improving the quality of milk, so as to produce a superior kind of cheese. "Pecudes, Armentaque et Jumenta sale maxime solicitantur ad *Pastum*, multo largiore *Lacte*, multoque gratiore etiam in *Caseo* Dote." Lib. 31, cap. 7.—In the next chapter but one, he notices the medical benefit of salt, either taken internally or applied externally, in preventing and curing the *scab* in sheep and oxen. "Pecorum quoque *Scabiem* et boum, illitus tollit. Daturque lingendus."—When I am referring to the medicinal effects of salt, I should not omit to mention its salutary effects in scrophulous or other complaints, *in restoring poor persons to health and comfort, by the use of warm or cold artificial salt baths*, when they cannot afford the expense of salt at its present price; or of a distant journey and a residence remote from their occupations.

south our coasts, no partition of property, no cultivation of soil is required; we have only to *reap* what the bounty of Providence has abundantly supplied. The boundless fields are already white for the harvest; and the labourers are standing all the day idle, for want of employment,—ready to enter on their task, as soon as the *financial prohibition* is removed.—The encouragement of our fisheries has been often in the view of the legislature: but all their measures have been defeated by the salt laws.—*Bounties* too, have been added, producing little effect, and subject to great abuse; and we have yet to learn, that the effectual and impartial bounty is to leave to the husbandman, the fisherman, the manufacturer, and to all, *as far as may be*, the free use of that *produce*, which the bounty of Providence has bestowed upon the country. If we really mean that the fisheries should prevail and prosper, as sources of internal supply and external commerce, as providing present employment for our sailors and future nurseries for our navy [2]—if we desire that the fisherman and cottager on the sea-coast should lay in a winter supply of salt fish for themselves and their neighbours, we must no longer embarrass them with vexatious conditions, which *they cannot understand or comply with*, but leave them free to purchase at a cheap rate, and at the nearest shop, the salt required for curing their fish,—and to use it for the benefit of themselves and their country. It has been supposed, that there is already a sufficient allowance of salt for the fisheries, and that it is the fault of those who do not use it: but what sailor, what fisherman, or cottager can provide *what the law requires*, proper and secure storehouses for keeping the salt, to be entered with

[1] The Downs Society, associated in November 1815, under the patronage of the Earl of Liverpool, is a very gratifying example of the associations which would be formed for this purpose, and of the improvements which would take place in our fisheries, if the difficulties and impediments created by the salt duties, were but repealed. The fish which was cured by that society in the preceding year (with a very little, though very valuable instruction from *Mr. Sievers*, a fishing merchant of London) received the first bounty paid under the late Act, on that part of the coast. They have sent 68 barrels of white herrings to Barbadoes, Antigua, Jamaica, and other West India Islands; from whence they have received the most favourable and gratifying accounts of the excellence of their fish; which sold at very high prices, a third more than those from either the United States, or British America. The Society have received orders for many hundred barrels for the ensuing season. *See the Report of the Committee of the Downs Society of Fishermen's Friends, 17th August, 1816.*

[2] There are about twenty thousand sailors on our southern coasts at present out of employment, being part of those lately dismissed from the Royal Navy, with little pensions proportioned to their services.—What a boon to them and others in like circumstances, would be the removal of the financial obstacles to the *salt fish* trade, and how ready would they and their boys be for the British Navy, when their country called for their services.

and approved by the excise officer? Who can cure in *bulk*, or can *dry salt* a hundred weight of fish with only fifty pounds of salt, *the present reduced allowance*? And even if the full allowance of salt were restored to the fisherman, and the previous condition of the erection and entry of proper and secure storehouses, entirely dispensed with,—what *uneducated* sailor, cottager, or fisherman, could travel through all the different sections of the Acts relating to this subject,—the bonds to be given, the annual accounts to be made out,—the entries, notices, and permits required,—and the penalties and forfeitures in breach of any of the forms prescribed? If an *educated lawyer* will do this, he will see

If the fish be *barrelled*, the allowance *may* be sufficient; but then the fisherman's expense is half as much again. The *Dorset Fishery Society*, however, with all the instruction and assistance they have had, exceeded the parliamentary allowance of salt this summer, even on *barrelled* fish; and the Treasury ordered the duty to be repaid to them, on the quantity of salt used beyond the proportion allowed by law. *See their Report*, p. 19.—On *foreign salt* imported for our fishery, I am informed there is no restriction. The Act for lessening the allowance on all *English* salt (55 Geo. III. Cap. 179.) passed last July.

A recent circumstance has occurred in regard to the Association for the relief of the manufacturing and laboring poor, where *statesmen* and *lawyers* were the acting parties, and every assistance given by Government; and yet all their measures baffled by the interference of a petty excise officer.—As this is a case which came within my personal observation, I will briefly state the circumstances.—In order to provide relief for the poor under the pressure of scarcity, the sum of 17000*l.* was raised by private subscription in the metropolis. Among other measures adopted, a contract was entered into with the North Sea fishermen, to purchase of them, at the rate of 18*l.* per ton, all the corned cod, which they could not otherwise dispose of; and in the year 1813, six hundred tons of corned cod, and three hundred tons of fresh cod, were supplied and distributed for the maintenance of our own poor, and of the French prisoners then in England. In 1814, the pressure of the scarcity still continuing, the Committee resolved to endeavour to double the supply: they therefore invested the sum of 2264*l.* 11*s.* in the purchase of salt, prepared tanks for curing the fish, and hired double the number of vessels that were employed in the preceding year. When the fishermen were ready to proceed on their voyages, doubts were suggested, and notices given by the excise officer of the district, as to their allowance of salt. An alarm instantly spread among the fishermen; and though upon the Committee's application to the Treasury, an order was obtained for the Excise to make the full allowance of salt duty free, yet the terror of pains, penalties, and Exchequer processes, prevailed among the fishermen, and most of them abandoned their contract for the season. In consequence, the quantity of 900 tons, or rather (what might have been obtained but for officious interference) the expected supply of eighteen hundred tons of palatable and nutritious food for the relief of a suffering population, was reduced to 150 tons, being only a twelfth part of what might otherwise have been obtained; the Association was subjected to a heavy loss, and countless loads of fish were lost to the country.

the impossibility of any of the class of labourers and sea-faring men, such as I have described, *ever taking the benefit of these allowances*. But, were the financial fetters of the salt laws once removed, we should then see what NATIONAL INDUSTRY and NATIONAL ENTERPRIZE could effect. Our sea-coasts would swarm with adventurous fishing boats; new means of employment would be afforded to the necessitous and unemployed; new supplies of life would be conveyed into the interior of the island; new sources of commerce be opened to foreign countries, and nurseries of seamen abound on our sea-coasts. No region on earth is so well adapted to the *salt fish* trade. We are a naval power: the ocean is our element. We possess a hardy enterprizing race of sailors, now grievously suffering for want of employment: we have shoals of fish[1] surrounding our coasts, and an inexhaustible store of native salt, which may be more easily and *much more profitably* applied in curing fish, than by exportation.

Though MANUFACTURES may not supply so great, or so desirable an increase of our means of employment, as agriculture and the fisheries, yet every addition to our manufactures is a considerable addition to the demand for labour, as well as to the resources

[1] The *salt duties* have contributed to the disuse of *salt fish* in this country; which formerly made part of the winter store and diet in most families. In the Earl of Northumberland's Household Book, we find fish in the established bill of fare, for breakfast, which consisted among other things, of "two pieces of salt fish, six red herrings, four white ones, or a dish of sprats."

In the Report of the Dutch Fishery, the Committee (page 24) observe "that the periodical shoals of herrings, in their progress from the North Sea to the Channel, appear in wonderful abundance in their straits, in the early part of October, and remain till the end of November; about which time they proceed gradually to the westward, and are caught off the Isle of Wight till the end of February. Such is the profusion of those fish while they continue between the Forelands, where they are necessarily condensed by the conformation of the straits, that the quantities taken on this part of the coast, amount to more than double the average catch of our great fishery at Newfoundland, in proportion to the time and number of hands employed in it. The mackerel are also found during their season, in remarkable abundance in these straits, which appear to form the limits of their migration up the Channel. In this neighbourhood (Deal) they generally remain from May to July, affording, like the herrings, a rich harvest that seems to invite the industry of the fishermen." In page 26 and 28, they add, that "Holland has no herrings near her own coast, but takes them on the coast of Britain, from Shetland to the coast of Sussex; commencing at the distance of 250 leagues, and ending at 50 leagues from her other ports. The cod banks on the North Sea may be considered as common to both nations; but Iceland is only half the distance from Great Britain."

of the country: and here too the *salt duties* present the same obstacle to progress and prosperity. On two of our manufactures there is a limited and qualified allowance of the salt duties,—on glass, and on muriatic acid for bleaching; but there are articles essentially necessary to our manufacturers, which the salt duties prevent our making at home, so that we are obliged to purchase from abroad, at much higher prices than we could make them at home. Such are *mineral alkali*, *sal-ammoniac*, *magnesia*, and *Glauber salts*, which might be made in this country, with great advantage and in great quantities, with a part of the salt which are now export, free of duty. In other manufactures, the effect of the salt duties is *only to injure* the English manufacturer, who, for the salt which his works require, must pay a duty of fifteen shillings a bushel on *his own salt*; while the foreigner has it, duty free. To enumerate all the uses of salt in their various processes, for facilitating and improving their operations, would require an intimate and confidential knowledge of the secrets of their manufactories: but it does not require that minute degree of information, to be convinced that on all our manufactures, the exports of which exceeded in value last year FIFTY-THREE MILLIONS, considering them merely as *objects of taxation*, the revenue suffers more in them only, from the effects of the salt duties, than the salt duties amount to.

Of articles essential to our manufactures, and capable of affording an increase of employment for the poor, in case of the repeal, or allowance of the salt duties, I shall first notice the article of MINERAL ALKALI, an ingredient in soap, and in some other of our manufactures. Three tons of salt will make one ton of mineral alkali; the salt without the duty, costing *forty-eight shillings*, and with the duty, NINETY-SIX POUNDS. The salt duties, in this instance, are not simply an impediment, but a prohibition; and in order to obtain this ingredient for soap, &c. our manufacturers have been driven to have recourse to Spain for *barilla*, the price of which varies very much. During the war, it was as high as 80*l.* per ton, and is as low as 30*l.* at present. If salt were allowed to be used free of duty, *mineral alkali* could be made of a superior quality, and at an inferior price, from our own salt works. At the same time, the supply of *barilla* is very insufficient; and our soap boilers are generally obliged to use other, inferior articles instead

* The repeal of the salt duties would increase the proportional use of *salt* in glazing *earthen ware*, instead of the use of *white lead*, which is very noxious to health, applied as it now is to the glazing of pans for milk, for salting beef, and for baking. See Bishop Watson's Chemical Essays, vol. ii. p. 265.

of it. This year the importation of barilla, though more than usual, is 6500 tons: but that is only a part of what this country requires for soap, and other manufactures. It is calculated, that there would be an annual demand at home, for 20,000 tons of mineral alkali; and that as much more might be immediately disposed of at foreign markets. Such a regular supply at home, would improve the quality of soap, lessen its price, benefit our other manufactures, and afford an advantageous market for 120,000 tons of salt, now sent abroad, duty free. It would set all our salt manufactories to work (many being now shut up) and produce an immediate increase in the demand for labour, not only in the salt works, and in preparing the new works for making the mineral alkali, and also in making it, but in our other manufactures. It would bear a duty of ten shillings per hundred weight; producing about 400,000*l.* a year to the revenue. *Mineral alkali* is an article so useful, that it is hardly possible to anticipate the *extent* of the demand for it, if the salt duties were out of the question: and with the spirit, science, and capital of our manufacturers, and our inexhaustible supply of salt and coals at less than six-pence a bushel, our advantages in the manufacture of it would be such, as to exclude all competition of foreign manufacturers. I am not unaware, that when this has been suggested, the objection on the part of the Excise has been, that if government were to allow the use of *salt*, which pays a duty of 30*l.* a ton, for making *mineral alkali*, to pay only 10*l.* a ton, the revenue would lose by it; and that what would be gained by the *alkali duty*, would be many times over conceded in the *salt duty*.—Now, it does not seem to have occurred, that the salt proposed to be used for making this *alkali* in England, is now *exported duty free* for the benefit of foreign manufacturers; and that if my sanguine wishes could be realized, and 40,000 tons of *mineral alkali* annually made from 120,000 tons of salt, *which would be otherwise sent abroad duty free*—the revenue would gain 400,000*l.* a year, where it now receives nothing—the country would save nearly as much more of money now remitted abroad for the purchase of *barilla*—our manufactures and export trade be augmented—the salt proprietor obtain a better market—the demand for labour be increased—and the public greatly benefited.

Another similar instance occurs in the making of SAL AMMONIAC; an article necessary to our manufactures, and hitherto imported at a considerable expense. This is so useful in working metals, that not less than twenty tons of sal ammoniac are annually used by workers of metals, in Birmingham only. Our chemists lately discovered a process for making it from common salt, not

only at much less expense, but of a superior quality: but the excise officers soon found out, that the salt used in this process, was liable to the full duty. Baffled, however, in this, the manufacturers made another effort; by adopting a process, for making *sal ammoniac* from the *bittern* of common salt works, which is otherwise waste and refuse: but here again the excise officers interfered, and decided that the code of salt laws prohibits this *bittern* to be converted to any such use, without payment of a duty that amounts to a prohibition. In the consequence, foreigners have made use of our own discovery, to establish manufactories of *sal ammoniac* in France and Germany. In North Britain, however, the use of this *bittern*, is allowed by Government, and *sal ammoniac* is making from it in many parts of Scotland.

During the process of making common salt, it would be easy to separate the MAGNESIA, and thereby greatly to improve the quality of the salt, for curing fish and animal food, and at the same time to produce quantities of *magnesia* for exportation; but the effect of the salt laws is to prohibit the use or sale of magnesia so obtained. As to GLAUBER SALTS, the *salt duties* have had a still more injurious and vexatious operation. I have observed, that there is an allowance of the salt duties for making *oxy-muriatic acid* for bleaching. In preparing this, there is a considerable *residuum*, which had been thrown away. To prevent this waste, a gentleman in Lancashire, constructed a large apparatus, consisting of boilers and crystallizing vessels, and succeeded in producing from this residuum many tons of very fine GLAUBER SALTS; on which he paid to the revenue, the *then existing* duty of 30*l.* a ton. "Government, however, (says Mr. Parkes, from whom I transcribe the fact)[1] has forbidden the sale of the *residuum*, and consequently this extensive apparatus has become useless." In these and other articles of manufacture, though the increase of the *demand for labour* may not be so considerable as in husbandry and the fisheries, yet if the total amount of what would be added to our manufactures by the repeal of the salt duties, be fairly estimated with its consequences in the increase of commerce, and of the trades and occupations connected with manufactures and commerce, we shall find a considerable and immediate addition would be thereby made to the sources of employment.

It must indeed astonish foreigners, that an immense *prohibitory* impost should be laid on an article of British produce, essentially necessary to our manufacturers, agriculturists, and fishermen; whilst Ireland and Scotland are burthened in a lesser degree, and

[1] Parkes' Chemical Essays, vol. iv. page 162.

France, and Spain, and all the rest of the world are *entirely free.* Very different is this from the policy of ancient governments, recognized by the greatest and highest authority: "Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?* "Of strangers."—"THEN ARE THE CHILDREN FREE."—But with us, and by our laws, the *strangers* are free; and the *children* are taxed to forty times the value.

The imposition of a tax, so far beyond the real value of the article on which it is imposed, inevitably leads to strictness and severity of language in the regulations respecting it; and notwithstanding all the pains, penalties, forfeitures, and restrictions, which have been so lavishly bestowed on these acts, payment of the duty is very frequently evaded. Taking into consideration the increase of price charged to the consumer, where an *excessive* tax has been previously advanced, and that this increase of price is also applied to *stolen salt* which has paid no duty at all, there will be little doubt but that the consumer pays twice the amount of what is received on account of this tax into His Majesty's Exchequer. This, however, is a minor consideration to that of the pernicious effects, which it produces on the moral character of the labouring class. The temptation of *forty times the original value, on a necessary article of life,* becomes so great as to affect their principles, and to convert honest men into scurvy knaves. Thievery, and its concomitant vices, prevail in the neighbourhood of great salt works, to an alarming degree. The salt is of so little value to the proprietor before the duty is paid, and is of so much value to the thief who evades the duty, that this kind of petty plunder is carried on to a considerable extent; so that many farmers in the neighbourhood, have a regular supply of salt at very reduced prices, periodically brought to their houses, to cure their bacon, salt their cheeses, and for other domestic purposes. This generates *thievish* habits among the labouring class,[1] and prepares them for

[1] The system which disgraces our statute book under the name of *Game Laws*, operates universally, and creates thieves and poachers over the whole kingdom. But the *Salt Laws*, though *locally* confined to particular districts, yet *so far as their infection extends*, are far more deleterious. The temptation to evil, reaches every age and class of the necessitous; is constantly present to them, and in its nature and degree is far more potent and destructive: and thus the unhappy labourer, seduced by the influence of bad laws, is led on from one fault to another, till he atones for his crimes by death or transportation.—*Smuggling* is an evil likewise produced by similar temptations, and producing the same immoral effects.—It is very justly observed in the *Downs Fishery Report*, which I have before referred to, that the general extension of our *Fisheries*, by giving honest and profitable employment to *sea-faring men*, "would immediately reduce, and gradually supplant the contraband trade

atrocious crimes. Two young men, who were executed a few years ago in Cheshire for defending their plunder by shooting at an exciseman, and who appeared to be by far the least culpable of their gang, confessed at the gallows, that *petty thefts in salt-works*, were the origin and cause of their criminal habits, and of the unhappy termination of lives, which might otherwise have been a blessing to the community.

Whenever the natural produce of a country is capable of increase in value by the *intellectual skill*, or *manual labor* of the inhabitants, it is true policy, and by no means unjustifiable policy, to check, and even to prohibit the exportation of it, in its rude and *unmanufactured* state. The retaining of it at home as an object of manufacture,[1] will supply the means of employing and enriching the people, and of augmenting the revenue of the state: and when it shall afterwards be exported in its manufactured state, it will be of far greater value as an object of export, and at the same time will have afforded an increased supply of *profitable occupation, and well earned subsistence*, two of the greatest temporal blessings which any Government can confer on active and rational beings.—The most important articles of natural produce in this country are Coals, and Salt.—If we had shewn the same want of wisdom in respect of our *coals*, that we have done with regard to our *salt*,—supplied foreigners with them duty free, and imposed a very heavy tax on home consumption,—we should have been a wretched, insignificant, and contemptible people: manufactures and commerce would have been almost unknown amongst us, and agriculture would have sympathized in the general depression. But on the other hand, if we will act with regard to our salt as wisely as we have done as to our coals,—encourage the *profitable* use of it in arts and manufactures, and give to our own countrymen the free and (as far as may be) the *exclusive* benefit of it,[2]—all the advantages which this country

which has been estimated at the enormous amount of fifteen millions sterling,—and thus render the revenue more productive."

[1] I should extend the word *produce*, to all articles, not *completely* manufactured; such as the *English twist*, of which, it is said, large quantities have been lately shipped for the use of foreign manufacturers; who can weave the cloth at a cheaper rate than our weavers, but have not been able to succeed in *spinning the twist*, so as to make their woollen and cotton goods equal to ours. The exportation of this twist has deprived several of our manufacturers of employment and subsistence.

[2] The British government is not the only one in the world that, in this respect, misjudges of its own true interest.—In his interesting and valuable account of the Brazils, Mr. Barrow states that, though there is plenty of *salt* on that coast, yet the exclusive right of the crown puts so high a price on it, that they cannot afford to give it to their cattle, to whom the use of it is essential; nor can they afford to salt their meat with it, as "the salt that

has derived from the *free use of coals*, would be doubled by the *free use of salt*; and whenever we may think fit to favor other countries with a participation in this advantage, the imposition of a duty on *exported salt*, would prevent the favor from being considered as wholly gratuitous.—It is on this ground that I submit that, not only during the continuance of the salt duties but even if they were wholly repealed as to ourselves, it would be a want of political wisdom, and an act of injustice to our own manufacturers, to allow the exportation of salt, *duty-free*, beyond the limits of the united kingdom; but that on what is allowed to be exported to foreign countries, there should be a custom-house duty, sufficient to compensate to our manufacturers for the greater burthen to which, in respect of higher wages and taxes, they are subjected.

I bear no personal enmity to the *Newfoundland fisheries*. But I am persuaded that one domestic fishery upon our own coasts, *employing our own people*, though only of half their magnitude, would do this country infinitely more real service, than they can ever do. They can never provide employment for our own poor: and they are not, *exclusively*, nurseries for British seamen. So far indeed from their being exclusively so, it is more than doubtful whether their effects are not inimical and injurious to the interests of this country, whilst they are very favorable to those of the American States; especially if it should appear, that a considerable portion of the persons employed in those fisheries, are emigrants from our sister island;—young men in the prime and most valuable part of life; who, instead of supplying our army and navy with sailors and soldiers, fly to a distant quarter of the globe; leaving the helpless and the aged to be provided for at the cost, and by the labor of those who continue at home:—young men, who, at the expiration of their three [2] years service, generally settle for life in America;

would be required to preserve the carcase of an ox, costs in general about thrice as much as the whole animal."—"The monopoly of salt (the proceeds) is estimated to produce to the crown of Portugal, about 15,000*l.* a year. Thus for the sake of realizing *so pitiful a sum*, thousands of cattle are suffered to perish, the carcases of such as are slaughtered, for the sake of the hides only, to be thrown away, the *fisheries* on the coasts checked, and in a great measure rendered useless, and one great source of commerce and navigation entirely dried up." Barrow's *Cochin China*, page 121.

[1] If the restrictions on the use of salt were removed, and those of our countrymen who are now engaged in the *Newfoundland Fishery*, would employ even a part of their capital *at home* in the British Fishery, they might greatly benefit themselves,—our unemployed sailors and fishermen, and their native country.

[2] The three years' service relates only to the apprentices, which they are bound to take under the navigation acts. The *green*, or *fresh* men (as they are called) go in hundreds every year from Ireland; and instead of coming back, as the old acts require, almost invariably go over to the Americans.

and in the event of war, are much more likely to assist in manning the fleets of America and France, than to enter into the British navy.

Our natural advantages in respect of the manufacture of salt, might give us a decided superiority over all other countries; advantages derived from our salt mines and brine springs, [1] from our being washed on every side by the salt waves of the boundless and inexhaustible ocean,—and made more valuable by the vast beds of coal, to be found in almost every part of the island,—by the extent of our navigation,—by the enterprizing spirit of our sailors and manufacturers,—and by the capital which we possess.—The mere dregs and refuse of our salt-pans, would produce glauber salts, magnesia, and sal ammoniac, to a great amount; the consumption of which, and the consequent demand, would be far greater in the civilized world, and even among savage nations, than an uninformed mind can conceive. The French process, of forming a dirty and inferior species of salt by mere atmospheric evaporation, must ever be tardy and imperfect, compared with what may be done by our scientific and enterprizing manufacturers, possessed of the powerful agency of coal, and of every facility of operation. The mere waste and refuse coals of Newcastle alone,—what is thrown aside and trodden under foot as not worth collecting for use, would supply fuel for making salt to a great value.

Among the benefits of the repeal of the salt duties, I must not omit the improvements which would *then* take place in the making of salt.—On my first visit to Northwich, when I saw their grate-doors quite open, the supply of coals unlimited, a thick black smoke rising, as a public object and a public nuisance, and their salt pans uncovered and exposed to rain, I was not surprized at being informed, that the crystallizing of one hundred tons of salt, required from 70 to 100 tons of coal. At the entrance of the town, my attention was attracted by rows of new houses, built on each side of the way. I complimented my conductor on the comforts which the laboring class appeared to enjoy here, and on the air of neatness and elegance which these buildings gave to the place. He told me these were *some* of the houses of officers of excise; and on further inquiry added, that there were 120 resident

[1] The brine springs produce the great portion of *the English salt*. What is made of rock salt, or of sea water, bears no comparison in point of quantity. The *brine* of Cheshire yields on an average 25 per cent. or one gallon of solid salt from four gallons of brine. Common sea water contains less than four per cent. of salt; but the strength, in a severe winter, might be increased, by adopting the Swedish practice of freezing the sea water, throwing away the ice, and reserving the remaining liquid for evaporation.

excisemen at Northwich. With a feeling that these gentlemen were the *diseases* of the place, I exclaimed with Virgil,

> Vestibulum ante ipsum, primique in Faucibus orci
> *Pallentes habitant morbi*—

History has said a great deal about the *thirty tyrants of Athens*: but what are they compared with the hundred and twenty of Northwich? *Numerically*, I know nothing like them, except the "*one hundred and twenty* princes, which it pleased Darius the king to set over the province of Babylon."—I do not mean any personal disrespect to these gentlemen. It is not their behaviour, but their *existence* that I object to: or if they must exist, I think they would be much better employed in *catching fish* than in preventing our having salt to *cure it*. Nor would I insinuate that Government abuses its power, when it employs so many excise officers in Northwich. Twice the number would not be sufficient to protect the revenue against the frauds and thefts occasioned by so excessive and disproportioned a tax.—What improvements can a man have the heart to attempt and perfect, or what experiments or investigations can he pursue with any spirit, when there are a *hundred and twenty persons* of different tempers and dispositions, living near him, each having the right[1] to examine all his works every hour of the day, interrupt his processes by the discovery of some obsolete clause in some forgotten Act of Parliament, and check his inquiries and deprive him of the benefit of his skill and attention? This unceasing interference, with all their operations, has so damped and extinguished their talent and invention, that instead of wondering that our salt manufacturers have made so little use of our recent discoveries in chemistry, and in the application of fire, we should rather admire that they have not been chained down to the old process of pouring brine on burning wood, and then raking the salt out of the ashes.[2] In the construction of their boilers, and of the apparatus belonging to them, much benefit might be derived from Count Rumford's improvements. The doors of the grates should be made to shut

[1] It is so completely in the power of the excise officer to thwart and interfere with all the processes and operations of the salt manufacturer, that his only wise policy is unlimited submission.—What inducement can a man have to try a question with the Crown and the Board of Excise, when the Board is the judge, and the Crown pays no costs? Is it worth while to contest a penalty of 50l. at the expense of 100l. when the costs are not to be repaid, even though the judgment be in the subject's favour.

[2] This was the old English process.—Tacitus mentions it as a practice of the Germans: "Illo in amne *salem* provenire, *super ardentem struem fusa*, contrariis inter se elementis, igne atque aquis concreta." Annal. *lib.* 13, *cap.* 57.—Pliny also mentions the German method of pouring the brine on a wood

quite close, so as to lessen the draft and quiet the fire at pleasure. Checks in the top of the flues, and particularly in the approach to the ascent up the chimney, would prevent the wasteful escape of *unconsumed heat* in the vehicle of black smoke; and contribute to preserve the apparatus from being destroyed by excess of fire, whilst it saved immense quantities of coals from being wasted, and converted into a public nuisance. Covers, or roofs to their boilers, would protect their processes from being checked by rain. Steam might be applied in many of their operations with great economy and effect; and by proper arrangement, one boiler might be made to supply *steam-heat* to crystallize the contents of another. I have no difficulty in venturing to assert, that *above half* of the present expenditure of fuel[1] may be saved, and a superior kind of salt produced, so as to fetch a higher price in foreign markets. *Sunday salt*, as it is called, is preferred to any other: yet the only difference is, that in making it, the process not being completed on Saturday, the fires are let down over Sunday, and the crystallization proceeds gently and gradually until Monday. The *large grained fishery salt* bears a much greater price than common white salt, being produced by a slower process, and with a mitigated degree[2] of heat: yet in making this salt, no advantage is taken in point of economy; the waste of coals is rather increased; and a ton of coals is allowed to make a ton of this salt. Again; the same *degree of heat* is continued during the whole process, instead of keeping up a boiling heat for only eight hours,[3] when a kind of granulation appears, and then leaving it *with a very gentle heat* for six or eight hours more, to complete the operation.—The objection to the common white salt is, that there is a proportion of *magnesia* in it, which from its *septic* quality, makes it not answer so well for curing beef and fish:

fire; and treats with contempt our superior process of boiling the brine, and crystallizing the salt by evaporation. *lib.* 31, *cap.* 1.

[1] In the salt works to which my inquiries were chiefly directed, the quantity of coals used were above 18,000 tons a year; a saving to the proprietor of half that expense, would amount to more than 4,000*l.* a year.

[2] Bishop Watson observes, that "the Dutch have long been famous for preparing a *salt* for the picking of herrings, by which they have acquired a superiority in that article of commerce over all other European nations. Their principal secret in this business consists *in evaporating the brine* made from the solution of bay salt *with the gentlest fire*, and in mixing with the brine a proper quantity of very *sour whey*; the acid whey unites itself with the uncombined fixed alkali, and thus prevents it from adhering to the common salt as it crystallizes. Any other mild acid might probably answer the same purpose." Chemical Essays, vol. 2, page 63.

[3] This is Mr. Thompson's practice at Cheltenham, where it answers very well. In his salts a kind of pellicle or scum forms on the top, in about eight hours, and is a signal for diminishing the heat.

In his manufactory of Cheltenham Salts, Mr. Thompson, in the same process that crystallizes his salts, and with little or no additional expense or trouble, separates the *magnesia*, and produces that article for sale to a considerable amount; but the salt manufacturers cannot *now* follow his example, and thus improve the quality of their salt; as the same objection would arise from the salt laws, to such a mode of producing *magnesia* from common salt, as has operated with irresistible effect against *our* manufacture of *sal ammoniac*.

I have already anticipated part of what I had to offer, on the probable effects of the repeal of the salt duties. The advantages that would result from power being given to our unemployed sailors, fishermen, and labourers, to reap the full and free benefit of our *insular* situation, and to form petty associations with their *messmates* for catching and curing of fish,—thus exercising their industry in a manner congenial to all their wishes and habits of life, and obtaining an honest independence favourable to the moral virtues of the country,—would partly remove the temptation[1] to illicit and contrabaud trade, whilst it afforded present occupation to our seafaring men, and future supplies for our navy; advantages of such inestimable value to this country, that the petty considerations of finance sink before them. At the same time, the extent of the improvements in agriculture, by the possession of a rich and hitherto *prohibited manure*, cheap, and light in conveyance, and always valuable as part of the compost dunghill, would enhance the value of our cultivated estates, and produce new and increasing sources of useful EMPLOYMENT, in reclaiming and enriching millions of acres of waste and uncultivated lands. In our manufactures, the *prohibition* that exists in some cases, and the *impediment* which embarrasses all our other operations, would be removed,[2] and our manufacturers be placed on a footing with those of other countries; the prices of many of the necessaries of life would be reduced; and more science, more energy, and more capital be directed to extend their operations; new processes would be introduced, new uses discovered, and fresh sources of occupation be supplied. The addition of healthful and profitable employment always gives strength and vigour to the body politic, and in every

[1] In the Report of the Committee of the *Downs Fishery*, the annual loss to the revenue by the *smuggling* of goods on the southern coasts of the island, is estimated at two millions a year. Whenever the repeal of the salt duties shall offer to all our *smugglers* the honest trade of fishermen instead of their present course of life, the saving thereby to the revenue, in this respect only, would go a great way to compensate for the abolition of all the salt duties.

[2] A gentleman, whose manufacture requires a good deal of salt, tells me he pays 36*l.* a ton for all the salt which his works require:—36*l.* for a ton of salt, for which the salt proprietor receives not quite 16*s.*!

state, and in all cases, is conducive to its vital prosperity; but in this country, and *at the present moment*, there are peculiar and unprecedented circumstances, to increase its value beyond calculation. Whilst, however, I am stating this, I am aware that GOVERNMENT has generally been, and is at present, *most earnest and anxious* to adopt every proper and practicable measure, for encouraging our manufactures, agriculture, and fisheries. On that EARNESTNESS and ANXIETY I found my chief hopes of success.

When a tax that produces less than a million and a half into His Majesty's Exchequer, takes twice that sum out of the pockets of his subjects, and deprives them of the benefit of their *natural produce* to ten times its amount, it should seem an easy task to find terms of *commutation*, that would prove beneficial to all. The *division* of the payment, however, so as to make it fair and equal (as far as is practicable) may require some consideration; and I am not so vain as to pretend to any peculiar knowledge or talent on the subject: but having stated my objections to the existing salt duties, it seems to be incumbent on me, to offer my idea of the principles on which a SALT COMMUTATION may be proposed, as a measure of expediency and propriety. In the first place, I would submit that the labouring poor should be entirely exempt; and have the free use of salt for domestic purposes, for preserving their bacon and fish, for improving their bread now often spoilt for want of a little salt, for increasing the milk of their cows, and the produce of their gardens, without any compensation on their part. In the next place, I conceive that income from trades and professions should not, especially in this instance, be subject to any contribution. A war like the last, a contest for existence and independence, may require extraordinary taxes: but the labours of the hand and the head, the produce of mental and manual exertion, should *generally* be free from taxation. In the third place, the *commutation* should be so calculated, as not to subject the individual to more than what he is now charged with under the existing salt duties. For example, if the *householder's* expense in salt be at present thirty shillings a year,[1] it will be an advantage to him to pay only twenty shillings a year in lieu of it. If *in a farming concern* the tax on salt for cheese, butter, bread, bacon, beef, and other domestic purposes, costs the farmer five pounds a year, it will be a considerable benefit to him to have the free use of *untaxed salt*, not only for his house, but for his flocks and herds, for his cows and horses, for his hay, his pasture and arable land,

[1] The difference between the expence of a family, in salt at the taxed price of 20s. a bushel, or at the untaxed price of 1s. the bushel, is more than I could have conceived, until I made inquiry respecting the quantity used in my own family, and in some others.

by contributing only a *portion* of what he *now* pays for the partial use of salt for *domestic purposes*[1] only. If the salt duties at present interfere with the improvement of landed estates, the landlords' contribution towards the repeal of them need only amount to a *small part* of the benefit which he would *immediately* derive from the repeal. If, again, the manufacturer, on account of the scarcity or inferior quality of *Spanish barilla*, prefers *mineral alkali* made from salt, he may very well afford to pay a duty on the mineral alkali, of *a tenth* of what he now pays on the quantity of salt from which it can be made; and if he makes use of salt for producing *sal ammoniac*, *Glauber salts*, or *magnesia*, he may pay a similar duty on it. If the salt proprietor is relieved from the embarrassing regulations on the exportation of salt, and has the full benefit of a very extensive and much better market[2] *at home*, he cannot object to a trivial duty on that which is *exported* abroad: and lastly, if by the repeal of the salt duties, the English manufacturer be enabled to make *muriatic and oxy-muriatic acid*, objects of exportation to foreign countries, a tax may be laid on the exportation of them. On these principles I venture to propose that a moiety of the SALT COMMUTATION be produced by a moderate duty on *mineral alkali*, *sal ammoniac*, *glauber salts*, *and magnesia*, (pro-

[1] In the Agricultural Report for the County of Chester by Mr. Holland, the annual allowance of salt for cheese, &c. in a farm of 200*l.* a year, is stated at half a bushel a week. This may perhaps be over-stated, though the book is in general correct. I am, however, persuaded that the expense of salt at its present price, in a farm, is much more than the farmers are in general aware of: and if in other counties there is less salt required for cheese than in Cheshire, more may be wanted for bacon, bread, butter, beef, fish, and other domestic purposes; and if we add the use of it for hay, cattle, manure, &c. the advantage of the repeal to the farmer would be very considerable.

[2] There are very few articles of commerce so unprofitable as the *exportation* of English salt. In the first place, the price is very inadequate, and the market uncertain; they have this year attempted to get 18*s.* a ton, and not succeeding, many of the works are shut up. Three-fourths of the price are, by their present process, expended in coals. Bonds from the proprietor and two sureties, to the amount of treble the duty (which on a load of a hundred tons would amount to 9,000*l.*), are required before the salt can be weighed and loaded at the works, and must be repeated again at the sea port, where the salt is again weighed; if, at the sea-port, there is any deficiency or excess (the comparative waste of salt being very uncertain) the proprietor is subject to penalties. The very expense of the bonds amounts to some hundreds a year.—This export trade in salt is nearly, if not wholly confined to Liverpool, and amounts on the average of the last six years to 160,000 tons a year; which might be used at home, with infinitely more benefit to the country. The increase of price which salt would fairly bear, and the great demand for salt *at home*, in case of the repeal of the duties, would make its export a thing of minor consideration. It is also probable that an improvement in the process of making salt, would augment the demand for it abroad, even though the price were a little more on account of the duty.

duced from common salt) and on *salt* exported out of the united kingdom, and also on *muriatic and oxy-muriatic acid*[1] produced from salt, and *exported*; these duties, on the average, not exceeding a tenth of the present duties, on the salt required for the several articles: and that, for the encouragement of the manufacture of mineral alkali, the duty on *imported barilla* be increased. The other moiety of the commutation will be easily supplied, by a very trivial annual contribution from landed property, bearing a very small proportion to the benefit it would derive from the repeal; and by a similar contribution from the occupiers of farms and houses, not amounting to so much as they now pay on account of the salt duties. In this manner half of the proposed commutation, would be supplied by duties on *new* manufactures from salt, hitherto *prohibited by the salt duties*, or by duties on exports and imports which the *repeal* would warrant; and the inhabitants of England would not have to pay any more for the *use of salt* for all purposes, (those new manufactures excepted) *than a part* of what they do now pay for the limited and restricted use of the portion of native salt, which they are now permitted to enjoy.

It may be said that the measure under consideration looks chiefly to the interest of the salt proprietor, and will be of more benefit to him than to others. I do not admit the fact; for I am persuaded that our financial resources, our manufacturers, seafaring men, farmers, land proprietors,—and above all, the suffering and *unemployed* individuals of the labouring class, will derive great and important benefits from the measure. But for a moment suppose, that a considerable part of the advantages of the repeal of the salt duties, would accrue to the salt proprietor,—and then let us see what are his claims to be relieved from the unequal burthen, which the code of salt laws has imposed upon his property. A bushel of salt, when purified and crystallized, is worth, (exclusive of the duty) about four pence halfpenny. On this bushel of salt the duty imposed is fifteen shillings, or 30*l.* per ton, being forty times the value of the article. Such is the fact. Let us then

[1] There are many trades and manufactures on the Continent, such as those of bleachers, calico printers, &c. which cannot be carried on without large supplies of *Muriatic Acid*, and also of *Oxymuriatic Acid*. And as foreigners, in making these chemicals, have had the *unrestrained* use of English salt, duty free, they obtain these articles, *so necessary to their operations*, at a much lower rate than our own manufacturers; who are subject to the severe restrictions of the 38th of Geo. III. in the use of salt, and are prevented from applying the *residuum* to any profitable purpose. If the salt used in England, were duty free, and a small duty laid on exported salt, *muriatic acid*, and *bleaching salts*, would become with us articles of *manufacture* to send abroad; and, on exportation, would bear a moderate duty, equivalent to the export duty on the quantity of salt from which these articles are made.

consider the *equity* of such a tax; and inquire, whether there is any other property in the United Kingdom, that pays a tenth part of its comparative amount. The *coal proprietor* may easily make the case his own, by only calculating the operation of a duty of 30*l.* a ton, on all coals for *home consumption*; so as to equalize his condition with that of the *salt proprietor*. There is nothing in the nature of coal,—no special ground of exemption,—no particular merit in its character or substance, to give it a preference over salt. They are both useful:—but many nations—the greatest part of the world—do very well without coals; none of them however can do *very well* without salt. Coal indeed is a substitute for turf, wood, and other fuel: but it will not manure land, preserve meat, cure fish, season and improve the food of man or beast, and render it palatable. Why then should the salt proprietor, in addition to all the other taxes, pay a tax of *forty times the value of his property*, when the coal proprietor pays nothing?—or rather, why should not both the proprietors be equally exempt, and the public—*the party really interested*—enjoy the full benefit of these two useful and valuable articles of British produce, in employing and enriching its individual members, and giving strength, permanence, and prosperity to the empire?

Let us, however, for a moment suppose the same duty of 30*l.* per ton were to be laid on coals, that is already imposed upon salt, with the same allowance of it, *duty free*, to foreign nations, *so as not to injure their manufacturers*; and let us try to anticipate the strength of argument, and vehemence of language, which would be applied to shew the injustice and impolicy of such a tax. The claim of a royal fifth out of some mines has been thought oppressive. Yet what is a fifth? what would be *four-fifths* of the annual produce of a *copper mine*, *lead mine*, or any other mine, compared with a tax which prohibits the proprietor, under the severest and most rigorously exacted penalties, to apply *three-penny worth of his own salt* for the use of his family, until the sum of *ten shillings* has been paid to the collector of excise *for permission to use it?*—Such, however, is the law.[1] Compared with this, the taking from him *nine-tenths* of his annual produce, would be nothing. He would enjoy the remaining tenth freely. What! after that he has

[1] The regulations respecting the salt duties are, on account of the *excessive* amount of the tax, *necessarily* very strict and severe. The salt proprietor is, in no case, allowed admission into his own warehouses, except in presence of the excise officer, who keeps the key, and never trusts it out of his hand on any account whatever. Whenever the proprietor wants admittance to them, he is obliged to give previous notice to the exciseman, and request him to attend. So, on the pumping into the pan, boiling, drawing, warehousing, and loading, previous notice must be given; and thereby time is lost, expense incurred, and the proprietor often materially injured.

raised his own property from the bowels of the earth, purified it, crystallized it, and fitted it for use, must he pay a fine of *forty times its value*, for permission to use it?—No privation, that does not take the whole, can be compared with such a tax.[1] I trust, therefore, that no Englishman who attentively considers the situation of the salt proprietor, will think it unreasonable that, when he has drawn up his brine from the springs on his own estate, and with considerable expense of fuel and labour, has purified and crystallized it, he should obtain eight-pence a bushel for the salt so produced, as well as the coal proprietor for his bushel of coals, brought out rough from the pit. What farmer would grudge paying two-pence for a peck of salt, if it would secure a load of hay from the effects of wet? or not give a shilling for a bushel and a half of salt, to preserve his sheep from the rot, and to increase the milk of his cows, the fat of his bullocks, and the health and strength of his horses and other animals? or who would think of the cost of ten shillings, for fifteen bushels of salt, to sweeten and improve as many acres of sour coarse grass, or to restore and fertilize as much of exhausted soil? It would indeed be an insult to my countrymen, after their noble and disinterested stand for the liberty and happiness of the civilized world, to suppose that their minds can become at once so narrow and sordid, as to be insensible of the inequality and injustice of a tax, lying with such excess of burthen on the property of one class of their fellow subjects. If the redress of the grievance were to be attended even with some personal expense or loss to the other members, still it should not be withheld: but when the repeal of the tax appears to be of general benefit to the community,—the commutation on the whole far less burthensome,—and the only question, the adjustment of a *few annual shillings* more or less, in the degree of contribution to be made for the abolition of the tax,—it were an aspersion on the British character (whilst kind and considerate to all other nations) to insinuate that it can fail in justice and attention to its own members.

The condition of a minister, however sought for and solicited, is seldom to be envied,—except when he has the means of doing an act of essential justice to individuals, and of general benefit to the community. Power so enjoyed, however awful the responsibility, is more than enviable;—it partakes of the nature of the divine

[1] In my attempt to draw the public attention to this subject, it is fortunate for me that I have no interest or concern in any salt works, nor (to my knowledge) any connection or relative, who has. My information, I can add, has been obtained from gentlemen whose knowledge and character induced me to give them credit, and has been confirmed by subsequent inquiry.

attributes. If the thanks of a country be due to the man, who has made two stems of corn to grow where only one grew before, what debt of gratitude will be due to that Statesman, who shall have the glory—of adding to the rich and luxuriant herbage and produce of his native land,—of releasing the property of some of his fellow subjects from a burthensome inequality of condition,—of relieving the manufacturers from restraints and impediments calculated to check and paralyse all their exertions,—and of removing from the labouring class, strong temptations to vicious and criminal habits, whilst they afforded them fresh means of subsistence, and opened to their industry, new and increasing sources of healthful and profitable employment?

POSTSCRIPT.

In the Letter which I have lately had the honor of addressing to you, I have endeavoured to shew how much the employment, subsistence, and moral character of the labouring class, and our most important sources of national prosperity from fisheries, agriculture, and manufactures, are affected by the SALT-DUTIES; and how easily and amply the revenue arising from them, may be compensated for; so as to give the free and unrestrained use of salt to our fishermen, manufacturers, and husbandmen,[1] for many profitable uses, which the present excessive duties exclude by an entire prohibition.

I have now to submit to your consideration, a few observations on some popular objections to the repeal of these duties.

It is said, that the *English salt* does not answer for curing fish, so well as that of *St. Ubes, St. Martin's, and Oleron;* and in confirmation of this, it is observed, that *foreign salt* is generally preferred for that purpose in the West of England.—I shall therefore first inquire, whether this superiority really exists, and if not, what are the causes of this preference.

Since our advancement in chemical science, we are less disposed to venerate *occult qualities*, being able to refer to experiments in the laboratory. With our present advantages, it is easy to ascertain the comparative quantities of *pure muriate of soda* in different

[1] In the political Romance of ARMATA, just published, a noble Lord has very forcibly expressed some of the objections to the salt duties, as injurious to our fisheries, agriculture, and manufactures. See pages 141, 168, 169, 170, and 189.

kinds of salt, and the proportions of impurities and extraneous matter; and particularly as to the presence of *magnesia*, which is considered as unfavourable to the preservation of animal food.—Now, this analysis of the different species of salt has been lately and accurately made by a physician of high character, distinguished for his laborious and scientific researches. Dr. Henry, of Manchester, has examined the comparative strength and purity of British and foreign salt, and the result of his investigation has proved, that the quantity of *pure muriate of soda* contained in the *large grained fishery salt* of Cheshire, is considerably more than what exists in the salt of *Oleron*, which is the strongest of the foreign salts; and that the proportion of sulphate and muriate of magnesia is ten times, and of other impurities in foreign salt, three times as much, as in the Cheshire salt. An account of this analysis [1] was read before the Royal Society, in January 1810, and published at Liverpool, in 1811. No one can read Dr. Henry's analysis without conviction, that the preference of the Cornish and

[1] Dr. Henry's Table of the result of his experiments is so curious and decisive, that I insert it.

Kind of Salt.	1000 parts by weight consist of							
	Insol. matter.	Muriate of Magnesia.	Total earthy muriates.	Sulph. of lime.	Sulph. of magnesia.	Total sulphates.	Total impurities.	Pure muriate of soda.
Foreign Bay Salt.								
St. Ube's -	9	3	3	23½	4½	28	40	960
St. Martin's	12	3½	3½	19	6	25	40½	959½
Oleron -	10	2	2	19	4¼	23¾	35¾	964¼
British Salt from sea water.								
Scotch (common) - -	4	28	28	15	17½	32½	64½	935½
Scotch (Sunday) -	1	11½	11½	12	4½	16½	29	971
Lymington (common)	2	11	11	15	35	50	63	937
Ditto (cat)	1	5	5	1	5	6	12	988
Cheshire Salt.								
Crushed rock	10	0.$\frac{1}{16}$	0.¼	6½	—	6½	16¾	983¼
Fishery -	1	0.¾	1	11¼	—	11¼	13¼	986¾
Common -	1	0.¾	1	14½	—	14½	16½	983½
Stoved -	1	0.¾	1	15½	—	15½	17½	982½

Devonshire fishermen, is not owing to the superior strength or purity of the foreign salt, but to other causes for the existence of which we shall not have far to inquire.

There are two circumstances, either of which is sufficient to account for the preference which has been given in Cornwall and Devonshire to foreign salt; the one, that there is no *limitation of quantity*, as to salt *imported* for curing fish; whilst the restriction which our laws have put on *English* salt allowed *duty free* for the fisheries, is such as it is not practicable for any fisherman to comply with. The allowance of *English salt*, duty free, for our fisheries, is, by Act of Parliament, only fifty pounds of salt for a hundred weight of fish; an allowance, with which it is impossible to *dry salt* fish, or to cure it *in bulk*, either for keeping or for a foreign market. Fish may be *corned* for present use with such an allowance of salt; and (it has been asserted) may be preserved in *barrels*; but even this attempt has recently failed, where fairly and favourably tried by the Downs Fishery Society; and in any event, the expense is very greatly enhanced to the fishermen, by the cost of the barrels. The obvious effect of such a restriction on the allowance of *English* salt, whilst no limitation is put on that *imported*, is that the fishermen find it necessary to have *some foreign salt*, in order to make up the requisite quantity, to salt their fish for keeping; and this has given birth to a popular prejudice, so frequently repeated, that "English salt will not answer for the fisheries without a *mixture* of foreign salt." The other cause to which I refer, is that the importation of *foreign salt* to our western and southern coasts, is connected with another trade, *more profitable* to the individuals concerned, than to Government. Foreign salt for the use of our fisheries, having never been liable to the English duty, is less scrupulously examined and weighed, than that from Cheshire, upon which a drawback is granted. Hence, it is said, after weighing a small part of the cargo, the interference of the officer proceeds no further, but the rest of the cargo, whatever it may contain, is passed by mensuration. With a lucrative *contraband trade* so covered and protected, it is not too much to suppose, that foreign salt may be afforded at a much cheaper rate than our Cheshire salt, subjected as it is to oppressive restrictions and regulations; and it will be no matter of wonder, if the *French Smuggler* sells his bushel of salt, containing eighty-four pounds, at the same price, as the English fair dealer can afford his bushel of fifty-six pounds of salt, being only two-thirds of the foreign bushel. These are the two circumstances, which I am induced to believe have caused this preference to be given in Cornwall and Devonshire, to the salt of foreign countries.

It is said, that a duty on the *export* of salt, though small, would be injurious to our salt proprietors in foreign markets.—This duty

makes no necessary part of the proposed commutation, and may be withdrawn, if the objection is not obviated by the consideration, that the repeal of the salt duties would produce a considerable *home market* for salt, not only superior in profit, but exceeding in amount all that our salt works, and any probable increase of them, would supply. The average export of salt from Cheshire, which constitutes the great supply of the foreign markets, appears by the returns of some years back, to be one hundred and sixty thousand tons a year. It is not probable that the exports of all the rest of the kingdom amount to half as much more. I would therefore wish the salt proprietors to consider, whether (in consequence of the repeal of the salt duties) our fisheries being freely and without impediment extended along our coasts,—the manufactures of mineral alkali and other articles from salt, which I have enumerated in my Letter, being carried on without any obstruction,—and the use of salt as a manure, and for preserving hay, and for the benefit of cattle, being adopted in many parts of the kingdom,—the quantity of salt, which we now send abroad for the benefit of foreigners and to our own injury, would be much more than *half* of what we should want for our home market?—The amount of salt for our fisheries, it would not be easy to state, with the superior natural advantages which we possess, and with that great and commanding advantage (if we should ever enjoy it) of having a cheap, abundant, and *unrestricted* supply of it at home. In Europe, the Dutch enjoy at present all the benefits of our natural produce and local situation, to the *exclusion* of our own people. "They have no herrings near their own coasts, but catch them on the coast of Britain, from Shetland to the coast of Sussex." Yet by the favour of British laws,[1] they purchase British salt to much more advantage than our fishermen can obtain it; undersell us at all foreign markets, and exclude us from the enjoyment of those natural blessings which the bounty of Providence has bestowed on this island. In America, the United States have taken advantage of the restrictions to which our fishermen are subjected, and of permission given them to fish on our fishing banks, to injure essentially our Newfoundland fishermen,[2] and to deprive them of above

[1] See the Letter to Mr. Vansittart, p. 29.—Our salt laws would appear to a foreigner, more like a code imposed by the interested jealousy of Holland, than as regulations adopted by the enlightened policy of England.

[2] I state this on the authority of a pamphlet lately published at Glasgow, intitled, "The Colonial Policy of Great Britain." It is there stated, that "the demand for fish in our West India settlements, upon an average of three years, ending 1807, was 456,221 cwt. 97,486 of which was furnished by the mother country, leaving 358,735 cwt. to be supplied from the American fisheries. Of this quantity, *above half* was supplied by the United States, using our salt and our fishing banks; and in the three years, only 170,610 cwt. from our Newfoundland fishery, found a market in our West

half the supply of fish for our West India colonies. It must therefore be difficult at present to estimate what *might* be the demand of salt for our fisheries, if the present impediments and obstructions were done away.—In respect to the manufacture of *mineral alkali* from salt, I have, from the information of scientific chemists, ventured to state, the probable demand of salt for that article only, at one hundred and twenty thousand tons a year, being about half of the whole quantity of salt at present exported. I have noticed other important articles,—such as *sal ammoniac*, *glauber salts*, *magnesia*, and *muriatic* and *oxymuriatic acid*, for Exportation. There can be very little doubt but that these new manufactures from salt, *duty free*, will altogether produce an advantageous market *at home* for at least one hundred and sixty thousand tons of salt, being the whole quantity now exported from Cheshire. This, however, is on the supposition that (in case of a duty being laid on them) regulations oppressive and embarrassing, like those now existing as to the manufacture of salt, be not imposed on these new manufactures. In fact, they would be unnecessary. The imposition of a duty on salt, such as the present odious tax of FORTY TIMES ITS VALUE, makes the strictest and severest conditions, not only necessary, but inefficient and unavailable; whereas the duty on these new manufactures from salt, instead of being *forty times* the price of the article, need not be a *fourth* of their extended value.

To the demand of salt for fisheries and manufactures, must be added that for husbandry. And here, if we estimate on only a bushel of salt per acre being used for six millions of the cultivable acres in England, we shall find an additional market for 150,000 tons of salt for *manure* only, exclusive of what may be wanted for hay and cattle. Again, if we suppose on this *exported* salt, a duty to be imposed, even as high as sixpence a bushel, that would not check the American, or any other foreign market, or be more than the salt proprietor would receive ample compensation for, in being relieved from the costly and oppressive regulations, to which the export of salt is at present subjected.

It has been said, that a repeal of the salt duties would have the effect of depriving several subordinate Excise officers of their situations, and of injuring others whose official profits and perquisites depend chiefly on *prosecutions and convictions*. On this I have to observe, that for part of those who are now attending the salt works, the new manufactures from salt would supply a more easy and less invidious duty than what they now have to perform; and as to the prospective increase of *excisemen*, if they were not

India Islands.—This is imputed to restrictions which our fishermen are subjected to, but the subjects of the United States are exempt from.

kept up quite to the present degree of population, it would not produce any serious inconvenience to this country. The other part of the objection, however, *that of profits and perquisites*, is of a more serious nature than I was aware of, when I addressed my Letter to you. I there stated the *immoral effects* of the salt duties, as confined to the neighbourhood of the great salt works: but information which I have just received, convinces me that this *infection spreads more widely than I had supposed.* "To our poor, (says my correspondent, an active magistrate of Cornwall) the temptation of smuggling an article, so easily concealed, and so universally in request, is commonly too great for them to resist, although at the expense of *perjury* and detection.—Of its *demoralizing* tendency I never had any doubt: but since I have been acting as a magistrate in this town, I find the evil far greater than I suspected. *Search warrants, hearings and convictions* are matters of constant recurrence."—If these convictions, therefore, and exchequer processes and prosecutions, constitute part of the *legal perquisites* of office, it would be far better for us all, that a few thousands a year were sacrificed in compensations, than that this mischief should be suffered to continue. In fact, all such temptations to evil, and all perplexity and intricacy in codes of taxation, though they may be profitable to the agents and underlings of office, are very pernicious to the state and to the community. Whilst they encourage fraud and theft and perjury, they injure the fair dealer; multiplying prosecutions and convictions, to the ruin of all the parties, except those who are the conductors or promoters.[1] The property of salt in Bengal is derived from the Mogul government, and vested with other prerogative rights in the East India Company. In the year 1782, the receipts from this fund had fallen short of its expenditure: and the accounts had become so intricate and involved, that it was thought necessary to abolish it, and recreate it in a new form. It was not that the public had been at all relieved from the burthen, but that the revenue was absorbed in the complication of the system, and frauds, thefts and perquisites engrossed all the profits. The genius of Mr. Hastings, with the aid o fyour late brother, Mr. Henry Vansittart, produced an effectual remedy. This consisted in simplifying the machinery. The con-

[1] The process of making salt in Bengal, is different from ours. It is produced from sea-water by the chemical action of fire, aided by the filtration of the diluted sand and mud of the river and sea-shore, and their conjoined evaperation by the means of an accumulation of pots of unglazed earthenware, presenting their several surfaces in the combination and form of a reverboratory furnace to the fire within. This work is performed by the natives of the country, of the professional appellation of *Molungees*; and the allotment of their local distribution over a vast extent of sea-coast, is called by the name of *Colarries*.—Such is the account, for which I am indebted to the kindness of *Mr. Hastings*.

troul of the entire department was undertaken by your brother, with salt agents under him for the superintendancy of each division of the salt works. The advances of money for the works were made through the controller to the salt agents; who accounted to him for their expenditures and returns, and he to the Governor General and Council. At the end of the year, the whole produce of salt was divided into a number of equal lots, and sold by public auction to the highest bidders; and such was the success that attended this measure of Mr. Hastings, and the ability and integrity with which it was executed by Mr. Vansittart, that, without any additional burthen to the public, this salt of Bengal produced, and has continued to produce, a clear income of *a crore of rupees*, or rather more than a million sterling. The retail price of salt in Bengal, like that of other necessaries of life, is now governed by the supply and the demand. By the last annual return, made up to April 1815, the quantity of salt produced during the preceding year in Bengal, was one hundred and sixty-two thousand tons, and the clear profit of government, that year, was eleven hundred and forty-two thousand pounds.

There is yet another objection; the *novelty and presumption* of starting objections to a tax, which has so long been submitted to. I am ready to admit that those, whose peculiar duty and power it is to provide and administer the remedy, have pledged themselves on the subject, and that they will keep their engagement: my object therefore has been to suggest to my countrymen reasons for submitting willingly and cheerfully to a *commutation duty*; which will not be, by even a *tenth part*, so burthensome as what they now bear.

In the year 1800, the attention of a Committee of the House of Commons was extended, from the consideration of the *British Herring Fisheries*, to the operation of the duties of salt; then £20. per ton, being only two-thirds of their present amount. In their report, after recognizing the inconveniences under which the fisheries[1] labour from restrictions, and the inefficacy of those restraints for the security of the revenue, they proceed to state "the practice of some of the trade, to pay the duty[2] for the salt they have used in the fishery, as being upon the whole *less burthensome than a compliance with the regulations* for the use of *duty free salt* would have been. Such however (they add) is the weight of the

[1] In Scotland, the difficulties in obtaining salt for the fisheries, are, if possible, greater than they are here. I am told, that in many parts, if the fisherman wants a permit to use a little salt for his fishery, he may have to travel fifty miles before he can find an exciseman.

[2] The addition of a duty of 10*l.* per ton (making 30*l.* in the whole) seems to have put an entire end to this practice, and the fish is now thrown overboard and destroyed.

duty, that in general the fishermen choose rather to throw overboard the fish,—than to cure it." The Committee therefore proceeded to recommend a COMMUTATION OF THE SALT DUTIES, as a measure highly deserving the attention of the House; as essentially conducing to the prosperity of the fisheries, and rendering unnecessary the bounties granted for them; and at the same time replete with other advantages in cheapening the subsistence of the people, and in the encouragement of a variety of useful arts.

In the next Session (after expressing a concurrence in the former Report) the Committee proceeded in their inquiry, and in June 1801, resolved—" that it is the opinion of this committee that a COMMUTATION OF THE DUTIES ON SALT would be productive of many great and important advantages to all descriptions of persons in this kingdom, and would be highly beneficial to its AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES, TRADE AND MANUFACTURES." And as all the orders of the community would derive benefit from the repeal, they agreed that the *commutation* should be by some *general tax*,[1] extending to them all: and concluded, that, at that late period of the season, the further consideration of the subject should be postponed till the *next Session* of Parliament.

The assurance, however, of the minister, Mr. PITT, " that whenever the return of peace enabled his Majesty's ministers to venture on a diminution of the revenue, *the repeal of the duty on salt* shall have their first consideration"—contributed to postpone the further discussion of the subject.—That period of the return of peace is now arrived, and it is accompanied by circumstances which press with weight and urgency for the *immediate* adoption of the measure.—A considerable portion of the labouring class in this country is, by unprecedented circumstances, deprived of those means of employment, which may be best supplied by the repeal of the salt duties.—And at the present critical period, after the exertions and events of the preceding war for above twenty years had engaged the feelings of us all, and supplied a powerful *stimulus* and interest to the public mind, the want of that or of some other sufficiently interesting object of attention is now severely felt, *and an evil spirit is gone forth among a portion of the people*, many of them being at the same time really suffering for want of proper occupation.

[1] In my letter to *Mr. Vansittart*, I have submitted the principles and outlines of a proposed *commutation* for the salt duties. Nothing has since occurred to make me doubt the information given me, that half the sum required, may be raised by a duty on *mineral* alkali, and other manufactures from salt; and the other half from landlords and tenants of farms, and from householders, by the payment of *about half* of what the extra price of salt now costs them. It will be obvious, that if half of the sum required, can be supplied by duties on *new manufactures from salt*, we shall only have to pay half of what we now pay.

all this may be immediately remedied by the REPEAL OF THE SALT DUTIES, which would instantaneously supply new and beneficial objects of industry and speculation to all the members of the community, who, instead of being engaged in turbulent and seditious meetings, would then be much more usefully and satisfactorily employed in making their own fortunes, and thereby contributing to the welfare and prosperity of the country.

Feb. 12, 1817.

SECOND POSTSCRIPT.

AT the present crisis, when want of employment for the labouring class, and deficiency in our general means of subsistence, have enabled factious individuals to disseminate sedition among men naturally loyal and generous,—and when the public attention is divided between the two great objects, of improving the situation of the cottager, and at the same time preserving the community from the mischievous effects of an evil spirit of novelty and discontent,—I beg leave to draw your attention to some additional circumstances, which may tend to shew how much the *early consideration* of the measure which I have submitted to you, will be contributory to both the objects to which I have alluded;—and how much the affection of the cottager may be increased, and the intrigues of *internal enemies* defeated, by his being relieved from an injurious and obnoxious tax, the repeal of which will supply new sources of profitable employment, and improve his means of domestic comfort and subsistence.

Nothing is more likely *eventually* to promote the happiness of the English poor, than what has been lately suggested in the House of Commons, by a respectable and independent member. The principle which Mr. CURWEN has adopted, is the same as that, on which our Society has uniformly acted.—In a very early stage of inquiry, we recognized this as our leading principle, that "Whatever encourages and promotes habits of INDUSTRY, PRUDENCE, FORESIGHT, VIRTUE, and CLEANLINESS among the poor, is beneficial to them and to the country;—whatever removes, or diminishes the incitement to any of these qualities, is detrimental to the STATE, and pernicious to the INDIVIDUAL." [1] This is the PRINCIPLE, on which the prospective and permanent welfare of

[1] Introductory Letter to the Third Volume of the Reports of the Society for bettering the condition of the poor, page 10.

the cottager may be most effectually promoted: but some *immediate* remedy is at present wanted, to relieve his distress, and calm his anxiety. The English cottager, so far as the Poor Laws have not affected him, is of a noble and independent character:—he cannot thrive on *eleemosynary* subsistence. His feelings are naturally in unison with what a noble Viscount has expressed with so much truth and energy; "that none able to work, should have any claim, but to the wages of labour; they should not be supplied with money, but with work, for which they should be paid."[1] But it is by no means the nature of the English poor to be deficient, either in personal gratitude, or in public feeling. With all the privations which the poor underwent in the late war, there was not a cottager, who had not an interest in the preservation of the civilized world from tyranny and devastation, who did not exult in the dignified part which the UNITED EMPIRE took in the contest, and whose heart did not beat with DEVOTION TO THE SUPREME BEING, for the restoration of peace and social order by the Battle of Waterloo, and with gratitude to the British Hero, who was the favoured instrument of Providence in that victory.

In the course of recent communications with different persons, on the probable consequences of the Repeal of the Salt duties, I have found many, who were exclusively impressed with one or other of the advantages, which might be fairly expected from the measure. The most general, and indeed the most obvious object of attention, is its effect on our FISHERIES. This stands prominent in view: the eye cannot withdraw its attention from it. The existence of this tax has, indeed, visibly injured this country, whilst it has promoted the interests of Holland, the United States, and other foreign powers. Those, again, who have witnessed the fertilizing effects of *refuse salt* in Cheshire, Worcestershire, and other districts, *when permitted*, and the use in other parts of *sea-mud*, *sea-weed*, and *sea-sand* as manures, all being the mere vehicles of salt, are awake to its benefit in tillage and grass land; whilst others who have tried its uses on refuse hay which the cattle had rejected, but which when chopped up with a little salt was eagerly preferred, appear to be fully aware of its value for *hay* and *cattle*. The makers of soap and others concerned in manufactures, who have submitted to the inconvenience and expense of remitting large sums of British money to foreign countries for the purchase of *foreign barilla*, rejoice in the prospect of being better and more cheaply supplied with *mineral alkali*, and other chemicals, made from English salt, which has hitherto been sent abroad for the benefit of foreigners; and are satisfied that, if *foreign barilla* can be excluded by a *prohibitory duty*, Scotland and Ireland, with in-

[1] *Lord Castlereagh's* Speech on Mr. Curwen's motion, 21st Feb. 1817.

creased exertion and industry, will enable us to supply the place of *foreign barilla* by the use of the KELP of our own islands. Others see advantages in increased sources of individual opulence, and national revenue, in nurseries of sailors and soldiers for the supply of our fleets and armies, and in our permanent prosperity and internal security: but I have met with no one except Mr. Curwen, who has paid much attention to its effects on the CONDITION AND COMFORTS OF COTTAGERS; the class of men on whose individual health and welfare, the general health and welfare of the political body do so much depend.

The repeal of the salt duties would benefit the COTTAGER, and all others of the labouring class, in three respects; 1st, in relief from the payment of a tax, existing in other states, and levied on a primary necessary of life; 2d, in the increase of the value and price of labour; and 3d, in the improvement of their means of subsistence. With a view to the first of these three, I have lately endeavoured to ascertain the average quantity of salt used in English cottages. The return from one part of the country is from two to three pounds of salt per month; from others, a pound of salt a week.[1] The latter would amount to a bushel a year; the former to about two thirds of that quantity. Taking, therefore, the retail price of salt at eighteen shillings the bushel (of which we may reckon the duty fifteen shillings, the *profit* for the *advance* of that duty two shillings, and the remaining shilling the original cost of the salt and carriage) the extra charge on the cottager for the salt duty alone, will be eleven shillings a year in one case, and seventeen shillings in the other, being a medium charge of fourteen shillings a year. At the same time, if he can obtain a little portion of beef at a cheap price, or can contrive to keep a pig to salt for his winter store, the burthen of the tax will be about twice as much; all paid for leave to use salt *for domestic purposes only* with a *prohibition* as to any other use. The opulent and thoughtless may affect to consider the payment of fourteen, or even of twenty-eight shillings a year, as trifling: but the relief from such a payment, by the spontaneous and liberal act of the other classes of the community, would be gratefully acknowledged by the poor, as an unequivocal and permanent benefit.

There is, however, another greater and more important advantage, which the labouring class would derive from the repeal of the salt duties, in respect of the *increased demand and price*

[1] This is more than I had at first supposed; and such I believe will be found the amount of the tax in other cases. A tenant of a dairy farm of 160*l.* a year, in Dorsetshire, who is remarkable for the exactness and correctness of his accounts, has just sent up word that his annual average consumption of salt amounts to eight bushels, which at 20*s.* a bushel, the price of salt in Dorsetshire, will be 8*l.* or 5 per cent. on the rent of the farm.

of labour, for new manufactures,[1] and the fisheries. The power of corporal exertion is the *estate* of the indigent and uninstructed, from which he derives the portion of comforts which he enjoys in society; comforts which (however undervalued) are, as Adam Smith justly observes, of greater value than the best enjoyments of the savage state. For the detail of the sources of new occupation, which would be supplied by the removal of this obstacle to free and profitable employment, I must refer to what I have already offered in my Lettter on the subject; whilst I proceed to consider, 3dly, the effects of the repeal on the *cottager's means of subsistence.*

It has long been the opinion of medical men, that the food of the English cottager has not enough in it of what is termed *condiment*; and that his diet might be improved, so as not only to be more palatable to him, but more conducive to his health, and to energy and activity of body. The Asiatics take freely of spices, the Africans of pepper and salt, and of animal food: but our labourers frequently make their bread without a sufficient portion of salt, and eat their potatoes and other vegetables without proper seasoning. The free use of salt would tend to correct this: and the cottager would then also enjoy a cheap and plentiful supply of corned fish and salted fish; and where he could feed his pig, or purchase with his extra wages in harvest, a lot of butcher's meat, when cheapest, he would be able, with a little *untaxed salt*, to preserve them for his domestic enjoyment in the scanty and dreary part of the year, and thus obtain a considerable portion of increased health and comfort by such an improvement in his means of life.

The vague and impracticable theories of weak and wicked enthusiasts, the dreams of equality of condition, and power, and wealth, and of partition among the idle, and the dissolute, of

[1] The average quantity of salt made in the Northwich district is about 200,000 tons a year. The salt proprietors say, that if there were a market for it, they could make *five times* that quantity. In any event we may estimate, that if the duties were repealed, the total amount, there and in other parts of England, would at least be trebled; and this would give wages to *three times the number of persons now employed in our salt works.* Again, in respect of *mineral alkali*, and other articles to be made from salt, the preparing of the buildings, &c. for those purposes, would supply a great deal of employment *immediately*; and the carrying on of those manufactures, would continue to furnish increasing sources of occupation for the laboring class. This would be exclusive, not only of the increase in other manufactures, depending on the *cheap and free supply* of salt, and on articles made from it, and of the *trade* and *commerce* connected with them, but also of the augmentation of the employment *immediately offered* to the poor in the *fisheries*, and what would hereafter be supplied in agriculture.

that exclusive property which industry and prudence have acquired, even if those dreams could be realized, would offer nothing of real value to the poor, in comparison with the advantages, which may be thus conferred on them by the wise and dignified liberality of the other members of society; the privilege of exemption from an almost universal tax on a necessary of life, the benefit of an increase in value and price of labour, and an healthful and acceptable addition to their food and general means of subsistence,

26th Feb. 1817.

JOURNAL

OF AN

ENGLISH TRAVELLER,

FROM 1814 TO 1816;

OR

MEMOIRS AND ANECDOTES

OF

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRINCESS OF WALES

AND OF HER COURT,

WITH

LETTERS OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS,

THE EARL OF LIVERPOOL, MR. WHITBREAD, &c.

LONDON:

1817.

JOURNAL

OF

AN ENGLISH TRAVELLER,

&c. &c.

INTRODUCTION.

THE name of Caroline of Brunswick holds too conspicuous a place in the history of the present times, not to excite the most lively interest in persons of every rank. The extraordinary vicissitudes experienced by this celebrated woman, and which even at this moment occupy the attention of all Europe, constitute an historical subject of the first importance.

When astonishing events occur to great personages, they usually form epochs in the annals of history. Such is the situation of the Princess, who by the circumstances of her public and private life must be rendered an object of general curiosity, both to her contemporaries and posterity. The various passages of her life are all of consequence; for it often happens, that events of little moment in themselves become important from the eminence of those personages to whom they relate.

The records of all times abound with memoirs and anecdotes of Princesses who have distinguished themselves by

their particular merits, but I believe no one ever deserved a more honourable place in the annals of history than the Princess of Wales, whether we regard her elevated rank or the memorable facts she has witnessed.

After the well known reverses which brought her character into question, her Royal Highness resolved to quit England and return to Brunswick. While there, she conceived the project of an extended tour; and it happened that a short time after the travelling mania seized me also, being at that time an epidemic among my countrymen. I freely confess, that I was chiefly induced to this resolution by an irresistible desire to follow the footsteps, and observe the conduct, of the Princess of Wales. I took so much interest in this employment, that I constituted myself a most strict and attentive observer of all her proceedings: nothing escaping me that could interest either the public or myself. Moreover, setting my characteristic curiosity aside —a woman called to the throne of England, and celebrated equally for her misfortunes and elevation of soul,—a woman who knows how to excel in every thing, and who travels in foreign countries, forsaking the luxuries of a court,—necessarily forms a great and interesting subject for the historian.

I knew her Royal Highness and her court at London, being ignorant of nothing that was either said or thought there. Divers groundless opinions have been formed of her conduct, which have vanished in succession, leaving nothing constant but the attachment of the people of England to her person, and her own firmness and imperturbility in the delicate and perilous situation into which she was precipitated by a powerful cabal.

What I propose to communicate cannot, I think, be unwelcome to the public—that is to say, the substance of the notes which I have taken with so much care, and the re-

sult of my observations on the motives which determined her Royal Highness to quit the Court—on her travels, and the changes which have taken place in her suite,—on her domestic system,—on the persons by whom she is surrounded, and whom it has pleased her to distinguish in Italy,—and finally, on various anecdotes during her travels and her abode in the country last mentioned.

These points, which at present are either unknown or misrepresented, and relative to which the public are exceedingly anxious, may form, in some sort, the continuation of a history, rendered interesting even in trifles by its subject.

It will be the duty of an impartial writer to explain the circumstances which have led to the reforms in the household of her Royal Highness, and obliged her to adopt a system of circumspection in reference to the persons allowed to approach her; as also to distinguish what is true from what is false or exaggerated in the reports concerning her. Truth alone shall be presented to the English nation and to Europe, at whose irresistible voice all the idle rumours in circulation will cease, even those which are supported by prejudice and the spirit of party.

Attached neither to person nor to party, I am the friend of truth, and at once a censor and apologist, without projects and without passion. I am an Englishman; and after that, who will suspect me of adulation? I propose to myself, by well attested facts, to establish a just opinion of her Royal Highness in regard to the various accidents which have befallen her, and to ground it faithfully on truth and circumstances.

Persons of high rank are uniformly the sport either of flattery or of calumny: a severe and impartial writer will despise both the one and the other. It is important, both for politics and morals, that the public and private lives of Princes, which serve as patterns for other people, be placed

in open day, that flattery may add nothing, nor envy or malignity take any thing away, and that facts may not be altered or misrepresented by the spirit of party.

My arrival in Italy preceded that of her Royal Highness by a few days, and I found the general mind there prejudiced against her. The incorrect opinions which prevailed apparently arose from past events. All this was very natural, and I was by no means surprised that the oscillations of opinion produced by a long suspense on a memorable occasion, should reach Italy. Acquainted with all that had passed in England, my interest and curiosity were redoubled, and I soon fathomed the extent of public credulity, always disposed to slander on the slightest grounds.

Thus, people affected to believe that it was a prudent wish to avoid new troubles, which determined her Royal Highness to quit the Court; then the same step was attributed to the necessity of obeying a positive command. On her arrival, rumours were circulated unfavourable to her private life. Signs of levity and inconstancy were recognised, even in her most innocent pleasures. Her open affability was beneath her station and an outrage upon her rank. Her most considerate and benevolent generosity was termed blind profusion. A manner void of parade, and the simplicity inseparable from real dignity, were said to originate in indecency and caprice. It was pretended that she loved not the English; that she had dismissed them from her suite, and was inaccessible to their approach. She was accused of being surrounded by Italians, and of being improperly surrounded. This manner of reasoning and of concluding arose out of the similar impressions which a momentous accusation had spread throughout Europe. Stunned by so many false rumours relative to a Princess so distinguished and so connected, I resolved to examine with critical severity all the facts and circumstances

which gave birth to these opinions. Whether it condemns or justifies her Royal Highness I would have the truth alone established and made known to Europe. It is time that calumny, cabal, and the idle discourse of a light-minded public should cease, and that a just opinion should be formed of a Princess, who must occupy an important place in history—that she be represented as she is, and not as prejudice and unfounded scandal would make her appear.

Let her contemporaries judge with a knowledge of facts and with impartiality, and their unbiassed decision will form that of posterity.

It is quite certain that no absolute order or injurious motive would have been able to prevail upon the Princess of Wales to quit the Court. Respected by government, beloved by the people, and thus justified in the eyes of all the world, neither pretence or violence could have laid a restraint on her inclination. Far more honourable motives led to the execution of a project which she had long premeditated; namely,—her own spontaneous will, seconded by that of the Prince, and approved by Ministers. The following documents, which by a happy chance I find in my possession, will verify this statement incontestably.

Letter from her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales to Lord Liverpool, first Minister to the Prince Regent, dated Connaught House, 25th July, 1814.

"The Princess of Wales requests Lord Liverpool to lay before the Prince Regent the contents of this letter.

"Actuated by the most urgent motive, that of restoring tranquillity to the Prince Regent, as well as to secure the peace of mind of which she has been for so many years deprived, the Princess of Wales, after mature reflection, has resolved to return to the Continent. This resolution ought not to surprise the Ministers of the Prince Regent, consi-

during the trouble and disagreeable experience of the Princess, for so long a time; and still more, after the indignity and mortification to which she has been exposed, by being withheld from receiving her nearest relations, and the most intimate friends of the late Duke of Brunswick, her illustrious father.

"The Princess is extremely anxious that the Prince Regent should be informed of the motives, and clearly comprehend her past conduct as politically exhibited. In exacting a justification from this noble nation,—her sole protection since the unfortunate indisposition of the King,—she is to be understood as solicitous only to maintain her rights and her honour, which are dearer to her than life itself.

"The Princess of Wales would have undertaken her projected tour long before, if she had not been prevented by the breaking off the projected marriage of the Princess Charlotte with the Prince of Orange. She could not resolve to leave her daughter without protection, at a period so critical. The Prince Regent having planned to establish the new married couple at the Hague, the Princess Charlotte, on that account principally, declined the match. Unwilling to prove any obstacle to future arrangement favourable to the happiness of her daughter, the Princess of Wales has at length resolved to return to Brunswick, her native country. She may afterwards travel into Italy and Greece, where she may probably be able to select an agreeable abode, and live in it for some years. The Princess flatters herself that the Prince Regent will have no objection to this design.

"The Princess of Wales requests Lord Liverpool to represent to the Prince Regent, that she resigns Montague House, and the title of Ranger of Greenwich Park, in favour of her daughter; as also the house bequeathed to

her by her mother. The Princess of Wales hopes the Prince Regent will grant this favour, the last she will solicit.

"The Princess embraces this opportunity to explain the motives which have induced her to decline the grant of 50,000l. voted to her by the nation in parliament. She expresses her most lively acknowledgement to this liberal and generous nation for its willingness to grant her such a pension during her life; but she has only taken 35,000l. because as the gift was intended to support her in her proper rank, and to enable her to hold a Court as became the Wife of the Prince Regent, the receipt of it would interfere with her views of travelling, and her purpose to quit England for a season. Such is the substance of her present communication to Lord Liverpool, which the Princess would have made before, but for the fear of producing new debates in parliament. She has therefore waited the rising of parliament, and is now about to depart for Worthing, to embark, not intending to return previously to London.

"The Princess of Wales is happy to assure Lord Liverpool that she will ever be ardently solicitous for the prosperity and glory of this generous nation."

Letter from the Princess of Wales to Mr. Whitbread, and to his Friends, dated 25th July, 1814.

"The Princess of Wales has the pleasure to inform, and frankly to avow to Mr. Whitbread, that she is about to take the most important step in her life. She has embraced the resolution of quitting this country for a time, and has written to Lord Liverpool to immediately inform the Prince Regent of her intention. The Princess inclosses a copy of this letter to Mr. Whitbread, to inform himself and friends of the plan of conduct which she has adopted.

"The Princess is so persuaded of the well-known integrity of Mr. Whitbread and Mr. Brougham, that she cannot doubt but *they* would have proposed such a step, if motives of delicacy had not prevented them. The Princess is deeply penetrated with gratitude for the attentions which they have shown her, at all times and on all occasions. This kindness on their part has withheld her from asking their advice on the present occasion; in every other instance, she assures them she has always followed the suggestions of her advisers and friends, and conformed to their superior intelligence.

"Her conscience tells her, that her conduct is worthy of her character and of her sentiments, and will always remain so. She has had sufficient leisure to reflect maturely before she adopted her present resolution. People who know not the character of the Princess may be disposed to believe, that she has been induced to adopt this measure in a moment of ill-humour; but she takes the Almighty to witness, that she has been intending to travel ever since 1806, although reasons, too long for explanation, have prevented her. No person possessed of pride and feeling could endure to be degraded below her rank in this kingdom, as Princess of Wales, or even as a simple individual, bear to be so hated by the Sovereign, as to be debarred from his presence both in public and in private. The Princess of Wales knows not how to support so much debasement and mortification. She cannot allow herself to be treated as a culprit by the Prince and his family, when her innocence has been acknowledged by ministers and by parliament, after an investigation which has done away the accusations of traitors and enemies.

"The Princess, having obtained this public satisfaction, cannot in conscience remain a burthen to her friends any longer. Events are continually occurring, which oblige

her zealous and generous advocates to step forward in her defence, and this devotion has even proved a source of disagreement between Mr. Whitbread and a part of his family. He cannot but remember that the Princess has been the cause of this difference, and it is with a view to its removal that she takes the part which she announces.

"The Princess of Wales is deeply penetrated with the generosity of this brave nation, which after having taken so lively an interest in her misfortunes, and in her sufferings, as cruel as they are unjust, so willingly affords her the means of living peaceably in future. She hopes that her gratitude, which will only cease with her existence, will be one day renewed in the Princess Charlotte, and that her daughter will give proofs of it by her zeal for the glory and happiness of this kingdom; by defending the rights of her people; and proving by her conduct, that great and powerful as she may be, she will not tyrannise over any one, merely because they have not the good fortune to please her.

"The Princess of Wales would probably not have departed so soon, had not the marriage of the Princess Charlotte with the Prince of Orange been broken off at her own instance. Dear as her daughter is to her, she could not resolve to leave her without protection in a situation so critical. The Princess, aware that the match was ardently desired by the people, wished neither to impede the happiness of the nation nor that of her daughter. On this account she is solicitous to depart at once, for it is pitiable to see a child rendered on all occasions a source of dispute between her parents.

"The Princess of Wales is assured that in future the Princess Charlotte will be more happy and tranquil, and she is led to make this sacrifice, that if she remains some time longer unmarried, there may be fewer obsta-

cles to her appearance in public. Her Father the Prince Regent may thus chuse the most suitable of her nearest relations to introduce her into society, that she may enjoy the pleasures belonging to her age, and become acquainted with the character of the most distinguished persons of the nation; of which knowledge, she has hitherto been deprived by means which she proceeds to detail.

"The Princess Charlotte will the less feel the privation of her mother's society, as she has been deprived of it for the two last years. During that time, five or six months in succession have passed away without the mother being allowed to see her daughter. She has even been refused the consolation of receiving any of her letters, and thus her regret at leaving her is lessened; for, although living in the same capital, they were not allowed to speak, even when they met in their airings. Her daughter's coachman was forbidden to stop, and directed to act as if he knew not the carriage of the Princess of Wales. Thus to quit her will but be the grief of a day, whilst to remain is to plant daggers in the bosoms both of mother and child. The Princess cannot rest in a situation so unfortunate for herself, and so uneasy to others, and is sure that Mr. Whitbread and his friends will be affected by these considerations; that their sentiments will accord with her own, and that they will approve of her resolution.

"The Princess, before she ends this long letter, is solicitous to explain to her advisers the most urgent reason for her quitting England, and to show them that delicacy has obliged her to put herself under the protection of this great and generous nation, having no other refuge since the indisposition of the King. How much has it cost her to make public this declaration—that is to say, that the Prince Regent has been her most inveterate enemy, imposed upon by false accusers and enemies to her honor.

"That which renders her situation still more embarrassing is, that this generous nation has shown more devotion towards herself than to its Ruler, who ought to be the blessing and glory of his people. The Princess hopes, that when she has quitted England, the Prince Regent will make public his conviction, that her conduct and character have not merited reproach; and thereby regain that popularity, which is due to him on the part of this noble nation.

"The Princess cannot end this letter without assuring Mr. Whitbread and his friends of the unalterable sentiments of lively gratitude and perfect esteem, that can only end with her life."

Letter of Mr. Whitbread to the Princess of Wales, the 1st of August, 1814.

"Mr. Whitbread assures her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, that he has *not* been at all surprised at the resolution with which she has been pleased to acquaint him; it cannot but give him much pain to think that he will not be able to enjoy the amiable society of the Princess for some time. Even in her absence, his zeal for her future happiness will be at all times, and in every place, his only object: he will prove it by his cares and his activity, and by his unalterable attachment, in contributing to the happiness of the Princess Charlotte, whose integrity of character should suffice to form his motive.

"In concluding this letter, Mr. Whitbread only wishes to reiterate his sentiments of devotion, and of zeal for her re-establishment in all the rights of the empire over which she is one day to reign.

"SAMUEL WHITBREAD."

Letter of Lord Liverpool to the Princess of Wales, the 28th of July, 1814.

"Lord Liverpool has had the honour to receive the letter of her Royal Highness. Having communicated it to the Prince Regent, he has ordered him to inform her Royal Highness that he can have no objection to the intentions of her Royal Highness to effect the design which she announces to the Prince Regent, of returning to her native country, to visit her brother, the Duke of Brunswick, assuring her, that the Prince Regent will never throw any obstacle in the way of her present or future intentions as to the place where she may wish to reside.

"The Prince Regent leaves entirely to the liberty of her Royal Highness to exercise her own discretion as to her abode in this country or on the continent, as it may be convenient to her.

"Lord Liverpool is also commanded on the part of the Prince Regent, to inform her Royal Highness, that he will not throw any obstacles in the way of the arrangements of her Royal Highness, whatever they may be, respecting the house of Black-heath, which belonged to the late Duchess of Brunswick, or the rest of the private property of her Royal Highness. But that for reasons, rather too long to explain, the Prince Regent will not permit the Princess Charlotte to be Ranger of Greenwich Park, nor to occupy any of the houses at Black-Heath, which her Royal Highness has hitherto occupied.

"Lord Liverpool has also been enjoined, on the part of the Prince Regent, before he closes the letter which he has the honour to send to her Royal Highness, to inform her in relation to the two articles which her Royal Highness has inserted in her letter, concerning the rupture of the marriage of the Princess Charlotte with the hereditary Prince of Orange, as well as to the reason for which the Allied Sove-

reigns did not, previously to their departure from England, pay their visit to her Royal Highness; that, as to the first article, Lord Liverpool is commanded by the Prince Regent to inform her Royal Highness, that the Prince Regent is not persuaded that the private considerations of the circumstances in which the Princess is placed, can have been an obstacle to the marriage of the Princess Charlotte. As to the second article, Lord Liverpool is also enjoined, on the part of the Prince Regent, to signify to her Royal Highness, that the Prince Regent never opposed himself to the Allied Sovereigns making a visit to her Royal Highness during their stay in London.

"Lord Liverpool has the honour to be, with all esteem and the highest consideration,

"P. S. The Prince Regent can make no difficulties on the subject of the directions which the Princess has the intention of giving as to the house at Black-heath; neither will the Prince Regent oppose her Royal Highness's retaining the apartments in the Palace of Kensington, in the same manner as she possessed them while in London, for the convenience of herself and suite."

These Letters reply of themselves to the false notions, to which ignorance and malignity have attributed the departure of her Royal Highness from Court, and from England. After all that had passed, her Royal Highness could not possibly reside agreeably at a Court, where she must necessarily submit to caprices, arising out of a determined spirit of opposition on the part of the Prince; which might oppose obstacles to the happiness of the daughter, upon whom the misfortunes of the mother seemed so likely to accumulate. The necessity of being restored to the peace of mind, of which her Royal Highness has been so long deprived, also required her departure, to which she was, at

the same time, induced by a prudential delicacy. This determination was officially communicated to the Prince Regent, who thought not of making any objection. I may add further, that the departure of her Royal Highness much afflicted the people of England, who exhibited evident marks of regret. How could the Princess live happily, when the most tender maternal love was cruelly opposed, and when neither herself nor the Princess Charlotte was allowed to behave, the one as a mother, the other as a daughter?

Persons have pretended, and the false rumour still prevails, that in Italy her Royal Highness had offended all the English in her train. Her enemies wished to circulate an opinion, that she loved not the English; and that she sought to remove them from her Court, as watchful observers of her conduct, whom she had reason to fear: nothing is more easy than to answer such charges, for the justification of her Royal Highness, in this respect, rest on well attested facts; and even should facts fail, the most revolting improbability will refute such imputations.

In truth, setting aside the sacred ties which attach the Princess of Wales to the English people, whose love and esteem as their future Sovereign, she ought to cultivate; who, more than the Princess of Wales, can regard and appreciate a people, to whose representatives she owes the integrity of her reputation, and the greatest triumph that innocence ever obtained? She owes, and declares that she owes, entire attachment to the elevated character of the people of England; and her gratitude will be equal to her obligations.

The English persons who composed the suite of her Royal Highness when she quitted England, gradually disappeared. The particular circumstances of many of these individuals,—her intended travellings, which design she had divulged—the great events about to take place—all con-

spired to produce this desertion. Her Royal Highness sought in vain to supply their places by other individuals of the same nation; they either declined, or would remain with her a short time only.

On the 9th August, 1814, the Princess embarked at the seaport of Worthing, in an English frigate, called the Jason, to return by way of Hamburgh, to Brunswick. Lady Charlotte Lindsey, and Lady Elizabeth Forbes, were her maids of honour. Mr. St. Leger was her chamberlain; and she had also for chamberlains, Mr. William Gell and Mr. Craven; her equerry was Captain Hess; her physician, Dr. Holland; Mr. Sicard, a German, was her major-domo; Mr. Jeronimus, a German, her messenger; Philip Cravel, a German, her page; his wife, an Englishwoman, was a domestic; and there were two chambermaids, also Germans. There was no English man-servant, except a young postillion, called Charles Hartop, who at Naples was made her coachman. The foregoing individuals composed the suite of the Princess when she quitted England. Mr. St. Leger, being prevented by family affairs, and an ill state of health, from journeying further, only accompanied her Royal Highness to Brunswick. Lady Charlotte Lindsey repaired to the Spa, either to join her sister, Lady Glenbervie, or on account of her health. She rejoined the Princess at Naples, who after four months abode in that town, quitted it, on account of the expence and the approaching political changes, and repaired, towards the end of March, to Genoa. Lady Elizabeth Forbes, desiring to see her sister in England, returned there and left Lady Charlotte Lindsey with the Princess. Mr. Craven was obliged to return to Germany on family affairs, and in order to meet his mother, the Margravine of Anspach. Mr. William Gell, being attacked by the gout, could not remain with the Princess any longer; and asked for a few

months leave of absence. Captain Hess was obliged to rejoin his regiment, in consequence of war being resumed. The Princess finding herself without an English chamberlain, wrote to Mr. St. Leger to join her at Genoa, with his family; at the same time offering the post of maid of honour to his daughter. Her Royal Highness dispatched many letters to press this arrangement, but he declined, alleging his ill health as the reason. The Princess then offered a place to Sir Humphry and Lady Davy, who were at Naples; but they also refused, pleading the different purpose of their travelling. From the same motives of health, Mr. William Rose, the brother of the English minister at Berlin, refused to join her Royal Highness. Mr. Davenport also refused, saying that he must return to England. In the same way, Mr. Hartop, cousin to Mr. Brougham, set out for England, to see his family. At Naples her Royal Highness was obliged to part with Dr. Holland; with Mr. North, brother of Lady Charlotte Lindsey; with Mrs. Falconet, the wife of her banker, who wished to visit her children in Switzerland. Mr. North and Lady Charlotte Lindsey left the Princess at Leghorn, to return to their parents in England. At Genoa, the Princess found Lady Glenbervie, her former lady of honour, with her lord, who remained with the Princess seven weeks. The Princess sent for Captain Hannam from England, to be her private secretary, who joined her at Genoa, and still forms a part of her establishment. The Clorinda frigate brought Lady Charlotte Campbell and family, consisting of six young ladies, to Genoa from Nice. The Princess engaged a lodging for them and their governess, at her own expense, while Lady Charlotte remained with her at her palace.

When the Princess departed for Milan, the above family accompanied her, her Royal Highness paying the expenses of their journey and table. Some weeks passed away, when

Lady Charlotte received a letter from her cousin, Mrs. Damer; and departed to join her at Lausanne.

Lady Charlotte Campbell, hoping to become the heir of her cousin, to whom she was moreover under many obligations, and leaving the Princess suddenly, Her Royal Highness offered to take her eldest daughter as a maid of honor; —she refused, which was accounted for by the young lady's marriage a few months afterwards, to Sir William Cumming. The Princess was then in a new embarrassment to obtain an English lady, always solicitous to have English about her. She therefore made similar propositions to lord and lady Malpas, then at Milan; but they were rejected. Lord Cholmondeley gained the confidence of the Regent many years ago, by his rare virtues and accomplishments. His son, lord Malpas, less careful of money, had shewn sufficient energy two years before to refuse figuring as one of the Zoilusses of the Court. It was on this account, and not to offend his father, or the Prince Regent, that he declined accepting the offer of the Princess.

After so many desertions and refusals on the part of the English, Her Royal Highness saw herself under the necessity of forming a Court of Italians.

The persons whom I have named, and who all survive, form in themselves a proof of the truths which I have advanced; and no additional justification is necessary. Her Royal Highness departed from England with a Court composed almost entirely of English; by whom she was gradually forsaken. She sought by every possible means to replace them by others of the same country; but owing to pretexts of ill health, fears, real or pretended, of long journies; home-sickness; the desire of seeing friends and relations; and other motives, sincere or otherwise; the Princess saw herself as it were deserted and alone. Calumny, which in

spite of notorious facts, would represent her Royal Highness as the cause of the absence of the English, ought then to be silent; and not seek to diffuse injurious suspicions under new forms, to have it believed, that antipathy on the part of her Royal Highness; a wish to remove impertinent spies, or the little esteem entertained for her by the English; induced her to send them all away from her Court.

Facts, a sort of proof which is always the most decisive, sufficiently answer the two first of these defamatory suppositions; and with respect to the third, it is absurd. Can it be conceived that the English have ceased to love and esteem on the Continent, a Princess, who in England obtained the suffrages of the whole nation? What then can be the cause of this removal of the English from her Court? It has been already remarked—motives of a personal nature, on the part of the individuals who composed her suite; to which must be added, as the greatest of all, the fear of incurring disregard at the Court of London; a fear but too well-founded, if the respective past and present situation of the Prince and Princess of Wales be considered. It cannot be doubted, that it is on this account so few of the English who visit Italy, pay their respects to her Royal Highness. Conscious of the unfavorable disposition of the Prince Regent, they are fearful of the dangers, by no means chimerical, which they may incur by the most simple mark of attention to the Princess.

The Princess has seen the motive of this reserve, and has not been disposed to resent it; on the contrary, she has thought it her duty to receive but a small number of those who presented themselves. She could calculate with confidence upon those who supported the national character, but such was not the case with all the English; and she found herself under the distressing necessity of regarding

some of them as hired spies. Her suspicions, unfortunately, were too well realized.

Her Royal Highness sought to have a Court, even in Italy; but the English of quality seemed anxious to avoid, at least they shewed themselves indifferent, or assumed a merit from attending it. She therefore surrounded herself with Italians; and it must be confessed to their honor, she has found among them faithful friends and servants; not an instance of treachery having occurred even among the meanest of the domestics.

The Court at present is composed of the following persons:—

The Countess Oldi, of Cremona, a lady respectable for her qualities and misfortunes, has been for a long time lady of honor to her Royal Highness.

Dr. Mochetti, of Como, formerly Professor of Botany, Agriculture, and Natural History, the author of many esteemed productions, forming part of the records of various Academies, of which he is a member, has the honor to be her physician. This gentleman is well known to the republic of letters, by his skill as a physician; and his name, which is celebrated in Italy, is not unknown to foreigners. He attended her Royal Highness on a part of her travels.

Mr. Robert Hannam, already mentioned, Knight of the order of Caroline, and a Lieutenant in the Navy, came from England at the invitation of her Royal Highness. He yet attends her as private secretary; and is a brave man, of an excellent character, and elevated principles.

The Chevalier Chiavini, of a noble and opulent family of Cremona, is first Equerry to her Royal Highness. He is as estimable for his integrity of character and cultivation of mind, as for his noble manners.

The young M. Guillaume, Knight of Jerusalem, and of Saint Caroline, is also her Equerry.

Mr. Louis Pergami presides over her household.

Mr. Vallotti Pergami, formerly Under-Prefect at Cremona, is Comptroller of Disbursement.

Her Royal Highness honors with her particular confidence the Chevalier Tomassia, Prefect of a department under the late government of Italy. His intimate knowledge of the belles-lettres, of philosophy, of politics, statistics, and public economy, are well known in Italy, by various useful works, which have given him a distinguished place among learned men. He thus merits all the esteem and consideration with which he is honored by her Royal Highness; as do also the distinguished Professors, Count Volta, and Mr. Configliachi. In the same manner, M. Cavelletti, formerly Equerry to the Emperor Napoleon, and the Chevalier Vassalli, persons of consideration, have frequently the honor to attend the Court of her Royal Highness.

Her law adviser is the advocate, M. Joseph Marocci, of Milan; well known in his profession.

Lastly, M. the Chevalier (of Malta) Barthelemy Pergami, is employed by her Royal Highness as her first Chamberlain. Public slander has been incessantly occupied in regard to this gentleman; and this is not wonderful, after so brilliant and rapid a career; for envy cannot bear the good fortune which is denied to itself. It is proper here to rectify public opinion, on the subject of so many injurious rumours and fabrications, and to render justice where it is due.

It is not from the mire, as many busy and ignorant people pretend, that her Royal Highness has exalted M. Barthelemy Pergami; his family was respectable and formerly rich. The honorable marriages of his three sisters prove this truth. The first is married to Count Oldi, the second to M. Severgrini, of an ancient family at Cremona,

and the third, with M. Martini de Lodi, brother of the Ex-Secretary-General of the captaincy of Padua, when commanded by his Excellency the Baron de Goez. Great domestic misfortunes had reduced this respectable family to poverty. The person under consideration, soaring beyond his bad fortune, and recollecting the past honorable condition of his family, embraced a military career, and was attached to the Etat-Major of the troops commanded by his Excellency the General Count Pino, in the campaigns of 1812, 1813, 1814, as attested by the following declaration of General-Major Galimberti:—

"I declare, that M. Le Baron Barthelemy Pergami of Cremona, Knight of Malta, has served in the Etat-Major of the troops commanded by his Excellency Count Pino, Lieutenant-General, to whom I was chief of the Etat-Major in the late campaigns of 1812, 1813, and 1814.

"Le General-Major Galimberti.

"Dated Milan, Nov. 1, 1816

"Seen and certified by me, Lieut.-General Count Pino."

M. Pergami, it is well known, received an offer of the brevet rank of captain from the unfortunate Joachim, King of Naples, which he refused, in order to remain in the service of her Royal Highness.

What then is there to be astonished at, and what has silly and envious slander to observe? Her Royal Highness has followed the example of great princes, who elevate to fortune and to honors obscure individuals of merit inferior to that of M. Pergami. Her Royal Highness, considering the condition of a most respectable family in misfortune, the education of this loyal man, his fidelity, his zeal for her service, and his military services, was interested in his favor. Her Royal Highness, not ignorant of the reverses which he had experienced, in recompence of his tried fidelity and devotion, raised him from a

courier to the rank of equerry, since to that of chamberlain, and procured him a barony in Sicily. She also decorated him with several orders of knighthood, proportioning all these benefits and honors to repeated marks of attachment to her person, particularly in the long and fatiguing journies undertaken by her Royal Highness.

What is there strange or marvellous in all this? What improper in the conduct of her Royal Highness? She has relieved an unfortunate man, and restored a worthy family to its ancient respectability. She has rewarded services, fidelity, and zeal. She has made a compensation for the dangers and hardships of a long and fatiguing tour. Is not an honest, loyal, and firm character of equal value with high hereditary nobility, where honors are frequently unmerited? This gentleman deserves his singular good fortune; for, by the equanimity with which he bears greatness, does he not show a high-born soul, designed by nature for an exalted destiny?

Firm in my principle of only consulting and concluding from facts, I have presented a picture, or a species of biography, of the persons who compose the Court of her Royal Highness.

At present the order of my ideas and progressive observations lead me to speak of the Court of her Royal Highness, and of her private life. A person of rank, worthy of credit, a judicious and impartial observer, who frequents the casino of her Royal Highness, where he is always welcome, will serve me as an infallible guide in the notices which I present to the public concerning the Princess's life and the order of her house.

Her Royal Highness purchased of the Countess Pino a pleasant casino, upon the bank of the lake of Como, at a short distance from that city. A delicious climate, the surrounding country varied and beautiful; a house, the

front of which is directly upon the lake, gardens which seem almost suspended in the air, form altogether a scene of enchantment. Her Royal Highness had an avenue of trees planted at her own expense, of nearly two miles in length, reaching from Como to her house. Generous and splendid in her ideas, she formed of the house of a private individual a royal palace: peace, order, and harmony, reigned in her family; it could scarcely be believed, that it was the court of a great Princess. Many persons were astonished that she did not receive the nobility of the neighbouring town; but her Royal Highness, who by principle does not love etiquette, who wishes to be at liberty, and whose mode of life is simple, almost monotonous, never sought the society of any noble; at the same time, those who were presented to her were never ill received.

She is accessible to all, she is affable, in her there is no affectation or caprice, she is mild towards every body; she knows not how to be a great Princess, except in doing good. Who would believe, nevertheless, that even at Como, there, where a part of her money was circulated, and where, more than in any other place, her beneficence and generosity were exerted—who would believe, I say, that even in this town unworthy stories of her were handed about, whence they made their way more extensively; that as much ill was spoken of her as she did good to the inhabitants. If my countrymen read these memoirs, they will themselves attest the truth of what I assert, they will say, that the Princess was in Italy what she was in London and at the Court. There are not wanting princes who are extolled for their goodness and popularity; but in them, let us say it without circumlocution, it is rather the effect of policy than a natural quality, since, according to them, this might derogate from their dignity. Her Royal Highness is always the same at all times and in all circumstances; the

idea of her greatness never betrays her; she is in principle, in her heart, what perhaps many others are only upon calculation and reflection.

A society of persons of probity and select, though not composed of the great; a table where gaiety presided, music, dramatic performances in her own private theatre, walking, riding on horseback or in the carriage, or rowing in a gondola, these were the innocent pleasures which she enjoyed tranquilly at her casino, quitting it rarely, indeed scarcely ever, for the bustle of the town.

The Italians have remarked in the Princess of Wales a cultivated mind, a ready and sure judgment, a brilliant imagination, an unvaried gaiety in all her movements and in her conversation; her greatness detracts nothing from the lively interest which her conversation inspires.

I am not ignorant that all sorts of falsehoods are circulated of her; but all ought to disappear before the evidence of facts, and the unanimous accord of a thousand witnesses. I could cite an infinite series of her good deeds, but the delicate silence of the benefactress imposes it upon me as a duty not to mention them. The following fact is however too notorious not to be inserted here. A house at Como being on fire, her Royal Highness immediately sent twelve hundred livres for the assistance of the unfortunate victims who suffered by it. I rejoice to see that the great of my nation carry with them every where that generosity, that spirit of philanthropy, for which they are so distinguished. This is not a frivolous vanity, this is not mere boasting, it is a true necessity of the heart, and the least painful duty enjoined them by their system of morals.

This picture may perhaps appear to those who are little instructed on the subject, or who are prejudiced, partial and exaggerated; but a picture drawn from attested facts, and supported by the testimony of a thousand [illegible] wit-

nessa cannot be suspected except by those who, like Malebranche, will not apply their eyes to the telescope that they may not see the spots in the sun.

Her Royal Highness being abandoned by the English who composed her court, not having been able to replace them by others of the same nation, finding herself thus insulated, formed an Italian Court. The Marquis Counsellor Ghisglieri recommended several ladies to her acquaintance; he it was who introduced to her the Countess of Oldi, a lady of great merit. In the month of June, 1815, Dr. Holland also quitted the Princess, to return to England, there to publish his travels, and to see his aged father.

It was a short time after that an infamous plot was formed against the Princess of Wales, the high origin of which it is not difficult to guess. Mr. William Burrell, the son of a person of great distinction in England, was at Milan at the same time with the Princess. Always disposed to have English about her, she proposed his remaining with her some months; he consequently accompanied her Royal Highness in her journey to Mantua, Bologna, Ferrara, and Venice, but not being disposed, on account of his health, to undertake a long voyage by sea, he left the Princess at Como in the month of August, at the house of the Marchioness Villani, in the Borgo Vico. One of his servants, named White, set himself about circulating ridiculous and exaggerated stories of what passed in the house of her Royal Highness. Mr. Burrell went to Brussels; and it was at the great inn in that city that White told these stories of the Princess, in the most scandalous and indecent manner, to the servants of the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland who were there in their way to England. These tales of the servants were related to the Court of Pall Mall, and this gave the idea of sending Lord Charles Stuart, brother to

Lord Castlereagh, to Milan. Lord Charles, according to his duty, never made himself known to her Royal Highness, but formed a strict friendship with the Baron d'Ompteda, a Chevalier of Hanover, and formerly ambassador from Jerome Napoleon, King of Westphalia, to the Court of Vienna. The Baron carried about with him in Italy a mortal chagrin from his disgrace; led on by promises, he degraded himself to the infamous trade of a spy, and set about watching the conduct of the Princess very narrowly. Lord Castlereagh, Minister of the Cabinet of London, and Confidant to the Prince Regent, seconded these plots and cabals, which date from the month of September, 1813. At this time, her Royal Highness was ready to set out upon the journey she had undertaken.

Her Royal Highness shuddered when, at her return to Milan, she learned from the police that she was surrounded by spies in her own house. The Baron d'Ompteda, who was at their head, had, during the absence of the Princess, endeavoured to corrupt some of the people in her service. They, however, all rejected with horror the proposals and promises which he made them, with tenders of money, to engage them in his enterprise, which had for its object to outrage the honour and reputation of the Princess. Not one of the Italians were base and treacherous enough to be seduced by him; Maurice Crede, a German, alone yielded to the temptation. He undertook to introduce the Baron d'Ompteda into the Princess's apartment by means of false keys, and it was by a very fortunate concurrence of circumstances that the plot was discovered. Her Royal Highness took the precaution of dismissing Crede, under the veil of an amorous intrigue in which he had been detected with Annette, a German, one of her waiting women. In hopes of regaining his place he revealed the whole affair; we shall transcribe here the declaration which he made in

writing, and which he sent in the form of a letter to the Chevalier Tomassia, to whose good offices he recommended himself to be re-admitted into the Princess's favour.

"Monsieur le Chevalier,

"I address myself to you, Sir, to obtain the greatest of favours, for which I shall be eternally grateful. I was yesterday dismissed from the service of her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, for having intrigued with her waiting-woman, Annette. This event, which has thrown me into the utmost consternation, has awakened in my heart a remorse which had agitated me for some time, and which I feel a necessity of imparting to you, in the hope that you may interest yourself for me, and get me to be received again into her Royal Highness's service.

"I must then confess that I merit my disgrace, since I suffered myself to be seduced by a certain Baron, M. d'Ompteda, to betray the best of mistresses, and the most generous of Princesses.

"It is about a year ago, or about a month before the departure of the Princess, that this Baron was to take all possible steps, through the intervention of a certain Ambrose Cesati, who came to Como to discover the place where my mistress slept, and to endeavour to procure false keys of her apartment. I persisted for some time in refusing to have any concern in this plot, but at length the Baron's threats, who told me I was a ruined man if I did not listen to him, together with the money he offered me from time to time, corrupted me, and I was weak enough to accept the commission, although fully persuaded that there was no foundation whatever for the Baron's infamous suspicions.

"I must say nevertheless, with the utmost sincerity, that the guilt of my conduct went no farther than answering the

questions put to me by d'Ompteda in the conferences I had with him, in which he interrogated me closely upon the situation of the different apartments in the Palace, as well as concerning the persons who were about the Princess.

"This, sir, is my confession; in making it, my heart is eased of a weight by which it was oppressed. I address myself to a man already estimable for his virtues, and who ought to feel commiseration for human weakness; whom I therefore supplicate to obtain my pardon from the Princess, and not to forsake me at this moment of calamity.

"Have pity, Sir, upon an unfortunate man, who, knowing his fault, seeks to repair it by repentance, hoping thus to be enabled, through your aid, to return to the path of honour. On you, sir, I place my whole reliance.

"I am, Sir, your very humble servant,

"MAURICE CREDE."

"*Como, November 3d,* 1816."

Her Royal Highness judged it proper to inform the Governor, Count Saura, of what had passed, who immediately banished the Baron d'Ompteda from the states of his Majesty the Emperor. The brave English officer, Mr. Hannam, private secretary to the Princess, shocked at the Baron's baseness, challenged him to a duel; but the latter by different pretences, and by delays, seemed, like a coward, to laugh at the challenge, fixing by turns all the four quarters of the world as the place of rencounter.

This sad event justifies but too much the system of circumspection which Her Royal Highness thought proper to adopt with respect to the English, the Germans, and others who might be about her. Under such circumstances, prudence demands that she does not allow any English or foreigners, but those who are known to her, access to her house. Is it not, besides, a great indignity, that they

should seek thus to watch the actions of a Princess, through the base medium of the most infamous spyism? Her conduct, frank and without mystery, is above all reproach; of this those who have the honour of being about her are the faithful witnesses.

After this fatal affair, her Royal Highness cannot but suspect every one who is unknown to her of being a traitor, and her mind, naturally so frank and confiding, must suffer extremely by such circumspection; she does not, however, deny access to any body, but she would avoid being the object of those scandalous stories, of that calumny, of the spyism, of which she has already been the victim. The events which have taken place give her reason to apprehend even darker conduct towards her than being surrounded by spies. The eagerness of the Baron d'Ompteda to know the situation of her chamber, and to procure false keys of it, furnish ground for suspicions yet more terrible. But let us draw a veil over this; there are hidden causes yet enveloped under the shades of mystery, of which, for the reputation of others, we had rather be ignorant.

A fact which took place at Genoa bears all the impression of an intent to murder, rather than merely to rob. Some individuals armed introduced themselves during the night into the Princess's house, and even penetrated so far as to her bed-chamber. The noise they made awoke her faithful servant Theodore Majocchi, who fired at and endeavoured to seize them; it remains still unknown who these people might be, or what might be their intention.

Let us recur to another thing. One day last summer I was at the country house of one of my friends, Mr. B. . . ., not far from Milan. The conversation turned upon the Princess of Wales, and we speculated upon the part of Barbary or Greece in which she might be at that moment. One of the company said, with an air of great importance, as if he had been the sole possessor of something very

choice and rare, that he had in his hands a pamphlet entitled, *Letters of the Princess of Wales*, which had been published in London some years before. This made me smile, without being aware of it, which strongly excited the curiosity of the company. It was very natural that they, in consequence, should ask me whether I knew these letters, and what was my opinion of them. This only farther excited my risibility; and at length I said, that the miserable production in question had been well known in England for a long time, and that the English considered it of just as much value as the Italians considered an old almanack. This beginning appeared very strange to some of the company, which I perceiving, proceeded thus:

"You must know, my friends, that the liberty of writing and printing in England, now almost degenerated into licentiousness, is such, that an author does not always write from the noble desire of publishing useful truths, but rather from motives of interest, to get what he can. Any one who knows how to string two ideas together, so as to produce something ridiculous and satirical, forms immediately from the offspring of his fancy and his caprices a trade more or less lucrative, according to the circumstances under which he writes. The case is not the same in Italy; there a book has the public voice in its favour only according to the true or useful matter which it contains. In England where they are inundated every day with publications of every kind, where they know that the author's aim is to get himself bread rather than honour, little attention is paid to this deluge of pamphlets, of memoirs, of anecdotes, of novels, and the like absurdities; truth is not a quality expected in these sort of works. Nobody, in consequence, gives himself the trouble of refuting the petty productions. Whatever may be the ridiculous fictions, the romantic thoughts, or the indecencies with which the letters abound,

never would any Englishman have thought of taking the trouble of answering them; upon the testimony of the title-page alone such sort of works are at once judged and condemned. The authors of them are perfectly well known to be people in want, with few scruples on the score of morality; impudent wretches, who, from their incapacity to pay their debts, end commonly in being shut up in a prison called the *King's Bench*. The author of the work in question, Mr. Asti, is well known for other productions of a similar description, and was shut up in this very prison for a libel which he published against the Marquis of Lansdown.

Upon the Continent the title of a work gives it currency; when an author's name appears to it they believe that he is really the author. Thus, because these letters are stated to have been written by the Princess, it is considered as the truth. But this is a kind of good faith which we English have not, and cannot have. I declare to you then, Gentlemen, that no Englishman would throw away his time in demonstrating that these letters are nothing but fictions from one end to the other,—a nursery of falsehoods. It suffices for me to advertise you of this, that you, like ourselves, may be upon your guard against such books.—My harangue seemed to satisfy them; they cast an eye over the letters, I made some observations, and they ended by throwing the book aside.

Her Royal Highness has been hitherto the sport of the most absurd rumours; indifferent, however, as to all that can be put forth with regard to her, she scarcely ever bestows a thought upon them. To be convinced to what a point malignity and inconsistency can be carried, I have just learnt from the heart of Italy that it is reported she is about to turn Roman Catholic. The attentions shewn her by the Pope, and those which she paid him in return, with

the wish she expressed of remaining some time at Rome was a sufficient foundation on which to graft such an absurdity, and make it pass as a truth. Perhaps the authors of the tale had the intention of preventing her going to Rome, the reason for which it would be difficult to discover. The late Duke of Gloucester, brother to the King of England, resided for several years at Rome, and the present Duke was born there; the same thing was therefore said of him, and the same has equally been said of Prince Augustus, the Duke of Sussex, sixth son to the King of England. This logic is, however, only exercised with regard to the Royal Family; would it not seem as if the right of residing at Rome was contested in the case of this family alone.

Her Royal Highness, at her return from her travels, was made the subject of general conversation; the journals had said little or nothing of her during her absence; but after her arrival they talked of her but too much, and in too great a variety of ways. Impatient to learn the particulars of so long a journey, and into countries so remote, I had recourse to one of her train, that is to say her first equerry, the Chevalier Schiavini, who had kept a very ample journal. He was so obliging as to let me have the perusal of it, and I must say that my curiosity was abundantly gratified. I learnt from it that her Royal Highness went from Genoa, to the Island of Elba, and thence to Sicily, where she visited the principal towns. From Sicily she proceeded to Barbary, then to Palestine and Jerusalem; she saw Carthage, Utica, Athens; she went to Malta; she admired the beautiful women of Milo in the Archipelago; she admired the temple of Theseus at Athens, still almost entire; she mounted the tribune of Demosthenes and of Eschines; she examined all the famous ruins of the cherished city of Minerva; contemplated the tombs of Pericles and of Thrasibulus; regarded with a timid eye the Temple of the Furies

where Œdipus died: she visited the tomb of the celebrated Antiope the Amazon, wife to Theseus, and passing on to Corinth, examined the temple of Neptune; from thence she proceeded to Constantinople. After passing the islands of Zia, Andros, Negropont, and the famous Tenedos, she landed at Troy to examine its last vestiges; she crossed the Scamander; saw the tower of Hero upon the Hellespont, passed on to Mitylene, and thence to Scio, where she saw the place that Homer occupied with his school. She next passed on to Samos, to Ephesus, to Cyprus, to St. Jean d'Acre, to Nazareth, after having seen Mount Carmel; to Jerusalem, where she admired the Holy Sepulchre and the Temple of Solomon, now converted into a mosque; afterwards she visited Bethlehem, the Mount of Olives, the river Jordan, Jaffa, and thence proceeded by Rhodes and Syracuse to Naples: from thence to the now famous town of Pizzo, to Terracina, and to Rome. All this, however, interested me little; a thousand travellers have gone over these countries, and we have abundant accounts of them; what I was solicitous to know was the reception her Royal Highness met with on the part of the various governments whither her course had been directed, what instruction she had received from her travels, and what figure she made in these countries. Her reception on the part of the Barbary governments everywhere corresponded with her elevated rank, but she attracted the general homage much more by her personal qualities than the eminence of her station.

With the assistance of several learned antiquarians, she made a collection of precious remains of antiquity, sparing nothing in the pursuit of an object so noble and so useful. But what I am the most anxious to make known, and I mention them with transport, is a series of acts of generosity which have left every where the highest idea of her heart and disposition. An Englishman ought not to observe silence

upon whatever may enhance the glory of his Princes; he ought to raise up and bring forth into day such objects as might be lost in the distance, or might be concealed by modesty.

Her Royal Highness, during the time that she was at Agosta, in Sicily, distributed every day with her own hands, and through the hands of others, sums of money among the poor; at Tunis she obtained the liberty of several slaves, and paid the debts of one of them. She gave to the new academy at Athens five hundred of the pieces called collonnates, and she allows two hundred annually to the same academy, paid through the hands of the banker Scaramanzo, at Constantinople; all those who were in prison for debt at Athens were liberated by her, for which she paid seven hundred pieces into the hands of the Governor, and she gave two hundred pieces to a poor and numerous Roman family resident in that city. At Constantinople she gave a poor Frenchman two hundred collonnates, and distributed her benefits almost in every corner of that city. To the conventual fathers of Jerusalem, she gave five hundred pieces, and settled on them two hundred annually, to be received from the banker above-named. Finally, she distributed at Rome two hundred pieces to the poor of that city.

Such benefactions in distant countries could not be given from motives of vanity; they must be the pure effusions of a benevolent heart, which has no other object but to satisfy itself; the persons, the places, the time, remove every suspicion of any different motive in such acts of the most enlightened generosity.

Many other facts, not less interesting, could I lay before the public; I could descant upon other objects which I have seen and verified myself, but the purpose of this journal is only to rectify the public opinion upon a subject of the greatest importance to the reputation of her Royal

Highness, and that by the aid only of facts the most strongly attested, and information the most deserving of credit. This end I think I have attained in publishing these memoirs, nor can I fear objections of any kind, for reasoning can never stand against facts; happy shall I be if the public shall learn to judge her Royal Highness impartially and without prejudice, above all as to what concerns some of the most important circumstances of her life. I take credit to myself, that in respecting truth I have vindicated her Royal Highness's honour and reputation.

I know that the Princess is writing her Memoirs, with the intention of publishing them in due time. They will throw great light upon many facts, respecting which at present no judgment can be formed from want of information. How impatient am I to read these memoirs!—The impatience of knowing the truth respecting great events which concern persons of high rank is surely very natural to every man of sense.

AN

ADDRESS

TO

THE FUND HOLDER,

THE MANUFACTURER, THE MECHANIC,

AND

The Poor;

ON THE SUBJECT OF

THE CORN LAWS.

BY RICHARD PRESTON, ESQ. M. P.

Magna est veritas et prævalebit.

SECOND EDITION WITH ALTERATIONS.

LONDON.

1817.

TO

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

GEORGE PONSONBY,

The steady Friend of the People,

Who opposes Ministers on those subjects alone, which are, in his opinion, injurious to the Public; while he uniformly gives to them his countenance and support, when they are pursuing measures of difficulty with a view to serve the country: thus exacting, even from the Ministers, the just tribute of gratitude for Liberality on the one hand, and Firmness and Patriotism on the other hand:—these Observations, on the important measure of the CORN BILL, so strenuously supported by his Arguments, are respectfully dedicated by his

Very faithful

And obedient servant,

RICH^d PRESTON.

The writer owes it to himself to declare, that the whole of this Work, except the parts within brackets, was written before the commencement of the discussions of this Session, and several Gentlemen of the highest respectability can attest that fact.

ON

THE CORN BILL.

THE first duty of a wise government is to provide for the subsistence of its population. The next duty is to promote and encourage the industry of that population, and afterwards to make the population and its industry the source of comfort, wealth, and happiness to the individuals, through a mild and just administration of affairs; giving to the people the blessings of liberty and independence, and applying these great instruments of the state, to increase its power as the means of making that power respected, and preserving the independence of the people.

These are the leading, correct, and more useful principles of a well-constituted government; and it is gratifying to the feelings of every Briton that he is born under a constitution, which in its theory, and generally speaking, in its administration, is unrivalled, and is the admiration, at least, to say no more, of surrounding nations.

That every system, however excellent, may be abused, is found to be true from the experience of all history, and the observation of every well-informed mind.

The preponderance which in modern times has by way of contrast to the despotism of the feudal system, been given to the monied, commercial, and the manufacturing, over the territorial or landed interest, is one of the great errors into which we have fallen. The facility with which the monied class have supplied loans, has led more powerfully than any other cause, to the progressive increase, and to the present alarming amount of our national debt, and to our profuse expenditure. It has led, as a consequence, to a burthensome and overwhelming taxation: while the mercantile interest are loud and clamorous on every attempt to tax their inte-

rests, and are ready to form a phalanx in opposition to the measure. The landed interest, either from pride or supineness, or from a diversity of interest and of politics, have suffered taxation to fall principally on those subjects which affect them; and clamour has been raised as often as legislative measures have been proposed for the protection of the landed or agricultural interests.

The time is now arrived when ruin is at the door of the agricultural interests.

The measure of a corn bill was originated when corn was at a high price, and the object of that measure was to reduce and to equalize the prices, not to keep them, far less to raise them, to a higher rate. Then the argument was, that the measure was altogether unnecessaty, and it was expedient to wait the experience of another year.

Before the last session of parliament, the prices had fallen, and large importations were expected. It was then urged that the low prices were the consequence of an abundant crop, of a harvest more plentiful than is usually experienced in this country; and that the alarm for a continuance of low prices, or of a depreciation from large importations, was not warranted by a just view of the subject. The peace with France had not yet opened a corn trade from that country. The harvest of 1814 proved very deficient, and the grain was of inferior quality; a large part of it not saleable in competition with corn of a better sample. From the harvest, and continually to this period, the expected importations from France have taken place. On account of the cheap rate at which the French farmer can afford his corn, the principal markets, (being the markets bordering on the coast,) have been continually supplied with wheat from that country; and there has been a constant reduction in the price, from the ability and the determination of the French farmer, and the merchant acting under him, of purchasing the corn grown in that country, to undersell the British farmer. The competition to sell, thus increasing the depreciation, has produced the unparalleled distress under which the agricultural interests now labor; a state of distress which cannot be conceived by any except those whose duty it is to examine, and understand their real condition. While the French farmer can sell wheat in this country at from four to five shillings per bushel, the British farmer cannot repay his expenses at less than nine shillings a bushel on lands of superior quality, or ten shillings on lands of inferior quality.

The general and prevailing opinion among the people, is, that cheap corn is a great blessing; that it is the fruit, the necessary attendant, and the just result of peace. The idea of *plenty* is ever combined with peace; but the combined notion of peace and plenty seem to be mistaken; or were true as applied to England, only when it was an agricultural country. Plenty is expected from peace, rather as a consequence of leisure

to pursue agriculture with greater success, and with fewer impediments. Plenty is also to flow to individuals from the ability to pay for the necessaries of life, rather than from the reduction of the price. Employment, the great source of wealth, and the legitimate object of commerce, ought to secure this plenty, by giving that remuneration for labor which will command all the necessaries of life. It ought to secure a market for home grown corn, instead of depressing or excluding it. Whoever entertains any doubt on these points, should read the economic tables of the Marquis de Mirabeau, the friend of mankind; and it is rather suprizing that a reprint of that work, as published by Wm. Owen, in 1766[1] (the period of riots respecting the price of corn) has not been offered to the public. The accidental perusal of that work has been the principal encouragement to the publication of the following observations. They were written long since, and are only an enlarged and detailed statement of the arguments which were advanced by the author in his place in the House of Commons, at different times, when the measures respecting the exportation of corn, or of duties for the protection of the British grower of corn, were depending in parliament.

These preliminary observations will lead obviously to the conclusion that the views and the objects of those, who consider the interposition of the legislature to be necessary for the protection of the growers of corn (of that part of our home growth or manufacture! call it by what name you please! which is our daily subsistence,[2]) have been greatly mistaken, or at least misrepresented. Neither the land owners, on their part, or the farmers on their part, desire any thing beyond a *protection duty;* corresponding to the protection afforded to all the principal articles of our various manufactures.

The object of the farmer is to be able to grow corn, with a certainty of being a fair competitor in the home market, for the disposal of that corn, to the extent only of a price which, on an average of years, shall allow him a remunerative profit for his labor and capital; or in other terms, the agriculturists seek to have such duty imposed on corn of foreign growth, imported and sold in this country, as shall make the foreign farmer contribute to the taxes of this country, in some degree proportioned to the burthens attaching on British husbandry. At the present crisis, and under the existing circumstances, the farmer prays for a protection from certain and overwhelming ruin.

The statesman and the patriot have a great duty to perform; to watch over the interest of the country; not to yield to clamour, but steadily to pursue the interest of the people, for the good of

[1] A digest of that work is now in print.
[2] Read *rate*.

the people, even at the hazard of a temporary sacrifice of popular reputation. Whoever doubts the policy of the measure to be now discussed, should read the admirable work of the Marquis de Mirabeau. In that work he will see the principles and the calculations on which he should act, and have abundant proofs that he will serve the country, the people, and the poor, by affording encouragement and protection to agriculture.

The profits of the farmer are in common opinion greatly overrated. In ordinary times, and on an average of years, the profit of the farmer may be computed at from ten to fifteen per cent. Say fifteen per cent, viz. five per cent. for the capital, and ten per cent. for the labour and skill employed in the due management of that capital. At this rate a farmer, with a capital of 1000*l.* employed on a farm of about 100 acres, would annually acquire 150*l.*; being 50*l.* for his interest, and 100*l.* a year, or one pound an acre for his skill, labour and attention, including a remuneration for the expense of his education, and the time devoted to the acquirement of the knowledge of his business. Few, very few, farmers realize this profit. Even under the best management: eight per cent. viz. five for capital, and three for labour and skill, are nearer the average, as far as any average can be drawn; and in opposition to the mistaken opinion of many, it is to be observed that less per centage is expected in proportion as the farm is improved, and consequently of high rent; or is of considerable extent, so as to enable the farmer to have full scope for his exertions, and for the employment of his capital; and yet, what would a manufacturer, a mechanic, a surgeon, or a member of the profession of the law, or of the church, say of his situation, if his returns for his labour, his capital, and his education, were of this limited extent? Is there any shopkeeper or tradesman in any city or town, who would deem 150*l.* a year too large an allowance for such a capital, and for his time closely and diligently employed on his business, from the earliest dawn of day, to the time of rest? and does not the rent and housekeeping of a tradesman, who opens a shop in any principal street of the city of London, commencing with a capital of 1000*l.* cost from 8*l.* to 10*l.* a week? or from 400*l.* to 500*l.* a year? and may not seven, eight, and even nine per cent. be made in the purchase of houses, ground-rents, &c. by the mere capitalist, who employs his money on these securities, without any other skill or labour than due caution, or judicious advice in the first investment.

In regard to merchants and manufacturers, how large are their profits, compared with those of the farmer! The experience of their wealth, and extended prosperity, is the strongest proof that their interests have not been sacrificed. As a body, merchants and

manufacturers make four times more of their capital, than the farmers make of their capital, without regarding the almost impossibility in England, of a farmer's conducting business on so large a scale, and with such means of employing increasing capital, as may be done by the merchant or the manufacturer. The income of the land proprietor depends on the rent alone. New families spring up from the fruits of commerce and manufacture, or the savings of those incomes which yield a large per centage in funded property, in houses, or annuities, or the high rate of interest of mortgages compared with the income arising from the rents of lands.

It is to merchants and other capitalists, who, during the late war, have invested their fortunes in land, that any extraordinary rise in rents, is, in a great measure, to be attributed. They reside near cities and manufacturing towns; and rents are, in these situations, generally, almost universally, high. They are rents for convenience, not calculated with a view to profit from agricultural produce. The laudable ambition, too, of being owners of the soil in such situations, has led merchants and manufacturers to give extravagant prices for land; and it is in such situations only that the high sounding rents of 3*l.* 4*l.* and 5*l.* per acre, are to be found. And even to farmers in such situations high rents are not a subject of just complaint. By the sale of milk, straw, vetches, vegetables, &c. in these situations, and the facility of obtaining manure in abundance, and on easy terms, the additional rent of 20*s.* or 30*s.* per acre is easily replaced. A crop of clover or vetches will, near a large city, or a manufacturing town, produce not only a greater profit, but also a higher return than an acre of wheat at comparatively a small expense. The like observation applies to potatoes, and the different kinds of pulse and vegetables.

On the one hand manufacturers have in part caused, and on the other hand they pay for, that extraordinary price in produce which justifies and supports high rents. The rise of wages uniformly commences with manufactures; and the increase of wages of agricultural labor follows only as consequential on the advance of wages to manufacturers.

At this moment corn is fifty per cent. higher in the manufacturing districts, than it is in those parts which are occupied by an inert, an idle, or by a mere agricultural population. This advance of rent, instead of being an injury, has been a source of property to the country.

In the less fortunate districts, the lands, the tenantry, their cattle, and their neighbours, are all in a state of beggary and starvation. The farmer starves his soil; the soil starves his cattle; and, in the result, the farmer and the cottagers around him, are in a state of poverty and wretchedness, more pitiable than the cattle, though,

on account of their idleness they were, while a fair scope for exertion was open to them, less deserving of pity.

It is impossible indeed, to shew a low rented district, and not to exhibit a peasantry more neglected than the soil they occupy. Advance the rents to a just price; encourage industry, and employment of capital, and how soon will the face of nature display the evidence of amelioration, not only in the soil of the country, but in the appearance of the inhabitants. Not the farmer, and his wife, and children alone; but the mason, the blacksmith, the sadler, the collar and harness-maker, the shoe-maker, the carpenter, the cooper, the drainer, the hedge-maker, and the cottagers in general, and their respective families; and in the result the parson, the lawyer, the attorney, the medical man, the manufacturer for home consumption, and the other numerous classes of society, and their dependants, would partake of the blessing. While land in a state of nature, or in a neglected condition, employs a very small portion of capital, and few labourers, the change will to those not acquainted with the subject be great beyond belief, the moment the ground shall be converted into regular cultivation. One thousand acres of land, requiring in its neglected state only a capital equal to the price of purchasing five hundred sheep, say 750*l.*, and one shepherd at 27*l.* a year wages, and making a total return of 500*l.* a year, (and this would be a large return!) would require, for useful and active cultivation, a capital of 5000*l.*, and an annual expenditure in wages, seed, &c. of about 3000*l.*; being 3*l.* an acre; besides rent, taxes, tithes, and profits, amounting to about 2000*l.* more in each year. To such energies England has owed its prosperity during the late extended and burthensome war. By agricultural pursuits founded on capital, by increasing our industry at home, while the demand for industry, in articles of manufacture for foreign markets was diminished; and by an active and efficient circulation, the pressure of the war was greatly diminished.

The capital withdrawn from commerce has shewn its value and importance in agriculture. The great principles of trade, valuing an active and well-employed capital, have diffused themselves into agriculture; and a capital, sunk in the land for its permanent improvement, has been preferred to the hungry and wretched system of a small capital, and a racking management: a system which works only one-tenth part of the soil, and leaves nine-tenth parts to the care of nature, and the occupation of weeds; while the other one-tenth part is cultivated and exhausted in succession, until one grain will not produce another. By a contrary practice, and from a country dependant on importation, we were become better fed, even with an increased population, and may still continue a country equal to provide for our own consumption, and may supply a

large quantity of corn to our own colonies, and even to our neighbours. Had this state of plenty existed early in the war, bullion would, in all probability, have remained in this country, and exchanges would have been in our favour, instead of being so injuriously against us. Our surplus provisions might have been sent to our army, at least have been sent to the ports in their rear; thus equalizing and diminishing the price at the parts occupied by the army. The war, and the demand which it occasioned, have at least excited industry, which is the first step to improvement, and proved the value of exertions, and of capital judiciously employed. Ireland has emerged from a state of extreme poverty to comparative wealth. Her ability to bear taxes, arising solely from her improved industry in husbandry, is acknowledged by the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and that country, while she has supplied this country with beef, pork, bacon, and cattle, during the war, has made a grateful and advantageous return to this country, in an increasing demand for our manufactures, and for articles of luxury; benefiting the manufacturer and the merchant, to the depression, in some degree, of English husbandry. But as this is a just and legitimate commerce, founded on the relative condition of the two countries, and will ultimately benefit both countries, no liberal person ever did complain of this boon to the agriculture of Ireland!

To the Scotch in particular, we are indebted for having made husbandry a foundation for the just employment of a large capital. It is in that country that agricultural knowledge, on a liberal scale, and by way of trade has diffused itself most generally, and as a consequence rents have advanced in that part of the united kingdom, more than in England by fifty per cent. and at this moment rents keep the same relative proportion.

The ancient owners of the soil, those families, the hereditary council of the nation, whom it is the best interest of the state and of the community to support, have, from the connection existing between them and their tenantry, and from the natural and laudable desire of patronage over that tenantry, as part of a liberal system, and not, as has been insinuated, as a relic of feudal despotism, been less anxious, and less strict to increase their rents, than those who have become the owners of the soil merely for a time, and on a principle of speculation or investment. By the evidence given before the Committee of the House of Commons in the last session of parliament, this fact is clearly and most satisfactorily established.

With this superior class of land proprietors the only desire has ever been, as it is at present, to receive such rents as shall enable them to preserve their order, their rank, and just station in society;

comparing their circumstances in life, with those of other persons by whom they are surrounded. Since the commencement of the American war, and the great increase of the national debt, lands have certainly advanced in price, but they have not advanced in price in the same proportion, as mercantile or manufacturing capital, or general wealth, has increased.

In 1767, 1768, and 1769, there were riots on account of the high price of provisions.—At the period of these riots good lands let at 20*s.*, medium lands at 15*s.*, inferior lands at 10*s.*, and some land at 6*s.* per acre;[1] and these lands, after excepting those rented for mere convenience, have in each class merely doubled their price. An advance always followed a great depression of agricultural interest; for in 1756, when Hale's excellent Treatise on Husbandry was published, the farmers' profits were so low that the rents in most places were ill paid, and the farms were continually throwing up.

At that time the prices of farm produce were—Bread, 2*d.* per lb.; in the metropolis, 3*d.*—Butter, from 6*d.* to 8*d.*—Cheese, from 4*d.* to 6*d.*—Wheat, 8*s.* a bushel.—Barley, 2*s.*—Oats, 1*s.* 6*d.*

Particular or favourite districts, are not in either case taken into the computation; such as the neighbourhood of Plymouth, or any other place which has since grown from comparative insignificance into considerable importance.

About this period the celebrated Benjamin Franklin committed his thoughts on the value of agriculture to print; and though he seems to have fallen into some errors respecting commerce, it is evident he treated, as most men have done, and as the experience of modern France demonstrates, agriculture as the source of true wealth.

The great increase of the metropolis has also had considerable influence in raising the prices of articles, by rendering it necessary that provisions should be collected from a great distance, and pass through many hands before they reach the consumer. There is frequently a difference of thirty per cent. between the price of meat in the metropolis, and in the markets of distant counties. Bread is always dearer in London than in places distant from the metropolis.

Though the rent has been increased, the land proprietor of this day with 200*l.* a year is not as rich, in comparison, as the land-owner of former times, who had an estate producing an income of 100*l.* a year. Every person of observation must be satisfied on this point. It is also obvious that the wages of the labourer, and of the mechanic, and also the profits of the manufacturer and of professional men, have increased in greater proportion; and the splendor and

[1] See Young's Southern Tour.

wealth of merchants and of manufacturers surpass those of the old families of landed interest. While the merchant, with a capital of 10,000*l.* enjoys more comfort and luxuries than the land proprietor of 500*l.* a year, he is at the same time accumulating wealth for his family: and by a few successful speculations can displace the owner of the land by purchasing his property even from the gains of his trade. Merchants and manufacturers, however, who are wise, never purchase land except for the convenience of occupation, till they have retired from the more profitable returns of commerce or manufacture.

Many farms pay at this day more for taxes and tithes than they yielded in rent at these periods. This is not vague assertion. The fact can be readily proved.

But it is to the depreciation in the value of money, or rather to the increase of the national debt, that we must principally look for the advance in the nominal amount, or sale price, of rent and of farm produce.

The country has been deluged with a national debt of immense amount, requiring for the interest and for the annual expences of government, a taxation of more than 60,000,000*l.* a year, for a peace establishment, and 112,000,000*l.* a year and more, for an active war establishment. To this debt must be added a large quantity of circulating medium in the shape of bills of exchange, banker's cash notes, exchequer bills, Bank of England paper, &c. &c. All these articles of currency have changed the relative value of things; much however to the advantage, rather than the injury of the country; but so long only, as the country shall have the wisdom to act with firmness and judgment, by keeping the *substance* of property, in just proportion of value, with the *debt* chargeable on it.

What is this national debt? Many will answer "property." It would be well if this were true in the strict sense of the term. It is a *debt* due from the state, to be raised from the resources of the country, as they consist of its wealth and principally of agricultural produce, and of its industry. We err egregiously in political calculations, when we treat one man as worth 10,000*l.* in three per cent. consolidated annuities; another man as worth 10,000*l.* in land; a third, as having 10,000*l.* on mortgage; and a fourth as having 10,000*l.* in merchandize. The truth is, the 10,000*l.* three per cent. consolidated annuities is a debt to be paid out of the substantial property, and the merchandize would also be greatly diminished in value if the price of land, or which is to produce the effect, agricultural produce were reduced. The mortgage debt must also be paid by the person from whom that debt

is owing; the merchant must also discharge those debts which he has contracted in aid of his capital, or for the purposes of his commerce. All these debts are so many charges to be deducted from the value of property in substance.

The more land shall fall in price, and manufactures in value, the greater would be the loss to the public creditor, unless he hoped that he should be paid in full even to the ruin of the land owner, and the person who possessed manufactures.

No class of the community is more interested than the public creditors in averting the impending ruin of the landed and agricultural interests. To this class of persons the inquiry may be addressed, *Nonne tuâ res interest quum proxima Ædes ardet?* Did any mortgagee, who had a scanty or precarious security, in point of value, ever labour, except from malice or from ignorance of his interest, to depreciate that security, or to diminish its annual returns. At this place it should be kept in mind that the present income to be paid to the public creditor is equal to ten shillings an acre a year on the soil, or nearly equal to half the rental of the land owners.

Nor is the public creditor precisely in the same condition with a mortgagee. A mortgagee obtains no increase of price by the improvement of the estate. All he has to fear, is a depreciation below the amount of the money which is due; while the public creditor will derive an advantage from the general prosperity of the country, fully equal to the increase of the value of the soil, and consequently its improvement. And on the other hand, every public misfortune, including the depression of agriculture, the best, and well understood, the greatest source of wealth, will occasion a corresponding depreciation in the value of funded property. In this view, the funded creditor, as far as he has the ownership of that property, will, notwithstanding the fixed amount of his income, derive a benefit from the support of agriculture, and the consequent prosperity of that part of our population which is employed in raising the necessaries of life: and even as to those who have merely life incomes from the funds, it is infinitely preferable that they should suffer a small diminution in the comparative value of their incomes, by reason of the continuance of the comparative high prices of corn, than that they should endanger the whole, or a large part of their incomes from the inability of the country to bear the present burthen of taxation.

To those who urge that corn, like every other article, should be left to find its level in the market, it may be answered that this would be correct, if all other articles could be placed on a just footing. It would also be correct if the object of the measure

under consideration were to make a regulation, wholly applicable to internal commerce, as between the growers and consumers of corn, considering all the corn used in the kingdom to be raised within the kingdom. But the argument fails when the measure to be considered is to enable the British farmer to be a competitor with the French and other farmers, in our own domestic market. Before you can bring corn to its price in former times, so as to find the desired level, you must do in this country as they have done in France: you must destroy the present system; annihilate the national debt, sacrifice the holders of public securities, relieve the farmer from the tythes and poor rates, and other public burthens, peculiarly affecting the land. Is any man so wild as to recommend or to promote this scheme? Anxious as the agricultural interests are for a modification of the tythe-laws!—for a commutation which shall place them on a just footing! which shall, on the one hand, secure to the clergy the fair value of their tythes, without the necessity of litigation, and without the liabiliy to which they are exposed, of frauds, &c. and on the other hand, shall protect the farmer from oppression, and from the liability to be taxed for his superior capital, skill, and industry! (a plan which is feasible, and may easily be accomplished, when government shall lend its aid to this measure of justice and policy) no good or rational man, would wish to overthrow our present institution, and commence the mad career of revolution, anarchy and confusion!!

Manufacturers for home consumption, a large part of our population, who have been overlooked in the general views of men treating of this subject, must depend on the ability of the population to pay for these articles of their manufacture; nor is the value of manufacture improved by low rents if we look back to the effect of exportation, since the depreciation of value would be felt through the medium of commerce; because (and this is a most important consideration, frequently overlooked or kept out of view,) the profit to the merchant consists principally in the value of the articles he takes in barter, and the ultimate price he shall obtain for them in the home market; a price which he rarely realizes in money. Steele, therefore, in the Spectator, on this subject, No. 174, very judiciously puts in the mouth of Sir Andrew Freeport, this language:

"For instance, if I am to trade to Turkey, I ought before-hand to know the demand of our manufactures there, as well as of their silks in England, and the customary prices that are given for both in each country. I ought to have a clear knowledge of these matters before hand, that I may presume upon sufficient returns to answer the charge of the cargo I have fitted out, the freight and

public creditor by an increase in income from rents, and the advance in the price of the necessaries of life, while the income from the funds (supposing a person to retain his funded property) is stationary! Besides, they who urge his complaint, forget that the surplus or extraordinary income received by the public creditor would, if regularly invested, more than counterbalance the increase of income from rents.

The increase of the national debt has necessarily led to an increase in the price of land and of rents. Men have grown rich in idea, at least beyond their expectations. The enormous fortunes of modern times varying from 10,000*l.* to 1,000,000*l.* have so eclipsed and surpassed those of former times, that, with the change of their amount, they have brought a change in their nature! A fortune of 10,000*l.* is found in modern times, where one of 2,500*l.* was formerly expected: and the income of the land owner of the present day is nearly on a par with the income of our ancestors in real and intrinsic value. Let persons of modern times look at the portions which their father and mother, and more remote ancestors received for their commencement in life, compared with those given by persons in like stations at the present day: and the justice of this observation will not stand in need of better proof.

While the public creditor has been receiving from five to six per cent. for his money, the land owner has been receiving about three per cent. for his money in the shape of rent; and while the land owner has been receiving three per cent. the capitalist has been receiving five per cent. or in the shape of annuity interest from seven to ten per cent.

During the late war, and it was one of its greatest mischiefs, no money was to be obtained by individuals, even on the most eligible securities at a less rate than from eight to ten per cent. To procure 10,000*l.* on a regular mortgage was next to impossible.* Many proceedings in the court of Chancery, and the experience of all gentlemen extensively engaged in assurances concerning property, would fully demonstrate this injury to which the landed interest has been subjected. It could not compete with the government raising money by loans; or extravagant heirs and tenants for life, raising money by way of annuity, at still higher rates of annual income.

These differences in income have produced great differences in wealth. The land proprietor would have been in a state of ruin had the rent of land been stationary.

A difference of 1*l.* per cent. in annual income, does in twenty

* Mr. Rose was quite mistaken in asserting the contrary.

years at compound interest, make a capital of about 30*l.* Therefore if the money lender receiving five per cent. buys land at the end of twenty years at an advance of sixty per cent. the two proprietors, one of money, the other of land, would be kept only on a par, and this has been the change in the state of things from all time: and hence in part the gradual, and with some exceptions from temporary causes, the increasing price of land, through the period of all our history since land became alienable at the will of the owner. The price, however, has rarely, if ever, advanced to the extent which the difference in income, and the power of accumulation justified.

But the advance in the price of land has not arisen wholly from the causes which have been stated. In a great measure, an increase in rent has arisen from liberal expenditure of capital, from an improved husbandry; the union of labour, skill, and capital;—from the facility of raising large crops at comparatively the cheapest rate; from those improvements which have rendered the growth of corn only a means of keeping an increased stock of cattle, and consequently producing more animal food for market;—as a means of improving instead of exhausting the soil, and of having more nutritious provender for cattle in winter than used to be supplied in the spring or the summer.

The threshing machine alone is computed to have increased the value of our consumable corn to the amount of four millions of money by the extra quantity of corn obtained, and by the saving of labour.

Whether a farmer raises fifteen bushels of wheat at an expenditure of 3*l.* or thirty bushels at an expenditure of 6*l.* is equally a benefit to him and the public. The produce and also his gains are increased.—The more he gains in proportion to his capital, the cheaper he can afford to sell the produce; and in proportion as you import corn, you take from him part of his profit, and make it *difficult*, indeed ruinous to him to sell his corn at cheap rates. The difference between one shilling per bushel is all the difference between loss and gain. Either the shilling which is reduced, or even an increase of demand in the market to the extent of the quantity imported, would satisfy the corn growers as their just proportion of profit. To diminish the quantity of the saleable article, and the price of the article produced, is to hasten the impending ruin in a twofold degree. The additional shilling can add very little if any thing to the cost price of manufacture; even supposing, contrary to the experience, and now the evidence of the fact, that the price of manufacturing labor depends on the price of corn. The consumption of each individual at eight bushels a year would only add 8*s.* a year to the value

of his labor; and allow an average of six to a family, the total amount would be only 48*s.* a year for extra expences, from the advance of 1*s.* per bushel. Besides, this advance must be on that scale of computation of the price of this first necessary of life, after it is ascertained what is the price of bread, by which the rate of wages is now regulated. How small is this advance in the price of corn compared with the advance in the price of cotton and other articles of the raw material imported into this country to be worked into manufacture for foreign trade.

It would be well worth the investigation to ascertain the difference which is made in the price of manufacture by the usual advance in the price of the raw material compared with the necessary advance, if there be any, in the price of labor from an increase in the price of corn; taken at the difference of the excess between the value of corn in the estimate of manufactures compared with the protecting price required by the growers of this article.

It is also lamentable to reflect that under the present system corn is at the highest price when the manufacturers are in the most distressed condition, and there is the least ability to pay the advanced price; and corn is at the lowest price when a revival of trade gives to the great body of manufacturers the ability to bear a higher price. This is an inversion of a just order of things! How greatly also are they mistaken who complain of *high rents* as the cause of the *high price* of corn.

Every agriculturist and every reasoning man knows that the corn farms, which let at three and four pounds an acre, (and they are few!!) are cheapest to the farmer, and that he can afford *to the public* the produce from such farm at the lowest rate.

Let an acre of ground produce forty bushels of wheat, or fifty bushels of barley, or sixty bushels of oats: a farmer who pays three pounds an acre for such ground, can render his corn cheaper than the occupier, who pays fifteen shillings per acre, and cannot raise more than fifteen bushels of wheat, twenty-five or thirty of barley, and forty of oats: the quantity pays to one all his rent, tithes, labor, and expences, and leaves a large surplus for profit; while the farmer who is at a low rent, generally in consequence of bad cultivation and want of manure, rather than the defect of staple in the soil, will be involved in ruin by his rent. Taxes and tithes are the same, or more in proportion. The expence of labor exceeds the difference of rent; and the labor, and more especially the manure, are increased in proportion as the soil is in an unprofitable and unproductive state. If such a farmer can clear the price of one bushel of wheat to himself as his profit, he blesses his good fortune. On more productive and higher rented soils, the farmer may set apart several bushels for his share of the profit.

Whoever knows the different districts in the kingdom must be satisfied that increase of rents has no material influence on the price of corn; and more than two-thirds of the kingdom are either let at rents less than the value, or are the property of the occupiers, who of course pay no rent. And competition between the different growers, prevents any such influence. Rent is merely a division between the farmer and the landlord of the probable surplus produce of the farm, taking that produce at the average prices of different years high and low; and taking the crops of the farm at their known medium productions. In this contract the turn ought always to be, as it generally is, in favor of the farmer: and the more skill he possesses, and the more capital he employs, the less will his rent be felt.

An increase of three bushels per acre by good management, would soon enrich the farmer, who had ample scope for exertion, and an adequate return in price to insure reproduction and progressive increase of crops.

The average crop of the kingdom being twenty bushels of wheat, the expence of raising the crop may be computed at from sixteen to seventeen bushels, according to the following table, which rejects prices: and thus meets the argument of a depreciation of every article of expence.

	Bushels.
Seed	2½
Tithes if compounded	1
Poor rate	½
Manure and Carriage	4
Church rates, way rates, turnpikes, and land tax	½
Labor of preparation and of weeding	4
Labor of harvesting and stacking and fencing	½
Threshing and marketing to port or market	½
Expence of capital	¾
Commission and transport to an average market	½
Vermin, &c. Waste, &c.	1
	16¼
Profit and remuneration to farmer and rent	3¾
The final balance	20

How different is the condition of the farmer, who grows vegetables at one penny per lb. An acre of potatoes would yield a net profit of more than 80*l.* equal to the profits on thirty acres of corn land. Gardeners who sell radishes, &c. make four times that sum.

To charge the farmer with high rents is to deceive him, and to lead to his ruin, and eventually to the injury of the farm and the injury of the landlord.

In general the rent is from one-fifth to one-seventh of the produce: it is always greater on a grass farm, than on a corn-bearing land, and on an improved, than on an exhausted farm; because the farmer has quicker and more certain returns from a farm in good condition, than from one in a neglected or exhausted state. On a farm requiring large sums to be expended, an allowance must be made to the farmer in rent, that he may gradually replace his capital and interest, and a profit on the same, and a compensation for his increased risk, labour, and anxiety.

In some parts of the country the same lands will let at 12*s.* an acre, which in other parts of the country would let at 80*s.* per acre, and yet if the size of the low-rented farm did not offer encouragement to active, wealthy, and enlightened farmers, a decided preference would be due to the high-rented farm with the advanced rent.

That rents are too high, proceeds from clamour, and not from calculation. At this moment the land owner is not receiving as large a proportion, in the shape of rent, of the value of corn or of beef, as he was receiving at former periods. He is receiving a less instead of a greater proportion, infinitely so when the improved capability of the soil is considered. But look at France, and at the rents paid in that country, and conviction must arise, that rents are, when compared with the prices of living in that country, higher in France than they are in England.

In England take wheat at 10*s.* per bushel, and the landlord does not, on an average of leases, receive more than one-seventh part of the produce in money rent.

On lands producing forty bushels, he may receive 8*l.* or from one-sixth to one-seventh; and of lands of this description there is only a very small portion. When such a produce is obtained, it was, till a recent period almost universally, by applying the principal capital of the farm, strength of labour, and quantity of manure, with a fallow and two years' rent and taxes to raise the crop.

On lands producing thirty bushels, he receives 40*s.* or from one-seventh to one-eighth.

On lands producing twenty bushels, he receives 80*s.* or one-sixth to one-seventh. Lands producing fifteen bushels pay only 10*s.* or from one-sixth to one-seventh. The average produce of the kingdom in wheat is not twenty bushels an acre, and the average rent does not amount to 50*s.* an acre. Nor let it be forgotten, that if the parson takes his due, (and some and not a few take it in

kind, the most injurious mode, because it robs the farm of its manure,) he takes one-tenth of the produce, or two-thirds of a sum equal to the rent; and the taxes and the poor rates are not less than the tithes, burthens from which the French farmer is exempt.

The land owner contends that he and his tenants are entitled to protection from an overwhelming importation from France and other countries which, reduce the price as much as you please of home grown corn, will be able and ready to undersell the English farmer in his own domestic market. This is not mere conjecture. It is the result of the experience of this year. French wheat of good quality, and none but wheat of a good quality will be imported, has sold as low as 8*l.* the load, or 4*s.* a bushel.

Under the present state of the markets, and the great uncertainty of the probable prices of corn in time to come, no leases can be granted on an equitable footing. It is impossible to fix a just amount of rent. Either no leases can be granted of any considerable duration, or the landlord or the farmer must be sacrificed in the bargain. In the last year the landlords have suffered; they have been necessitated, with very few exceptions, to give an undue advantage to the farmer on an average of the lease. Timid or needy land owners have diminished their income for a term of seven or fourteen years, from an apprehension that the prices of corn would continue as low as at present, or suffer a still greater depreciation.

Intelligent farmers understand their interest better than the generality of land owners understand their interest. The reluctance of farmers to pay a corn rent, and indeed all experience prove, that a continued depression of corn even for a few years must eventually benefit the farmers to the sacrifice of the land owners, without any equivalent or corresponding benefit to the public. High prices of corn always precede an advance of rent, and a very extensive experience has satisfied the writer of these observations that in nine instances out of ten at this very moment, the farmers have no just reason to complain that the rent is too high for the average of the next seven years. The rents have been generally almost universally fixed at the scale of 10*s.* a bushel for wheat; and no reasonable man can expect that corn can in this country be rendered at a cheaper rate on the average of seven years from the produce of our soil. At the present time no rent whatever can be afforded, since the expence of raising the produce, without treating rent as an item of expence, exceeds the sale price of the produce.

By legislative measures in which they have frequently concurred, the British land proprietors have lent their aid to exclude French

and other foreign manufactures, or to protect English manufactures, by countervailing duties.

They have at times also consented to the prohibition of the use of corn in the distilleries, and in the breweries, partly to increase the quantity of bread corn, during the times of scarcity; and partly to give a market to continental produce.

At other and more distant periods they have forborne to inclose the wastes and the sheep pastures now producing the best corn, out of respect to public clamour that they would destroy the sheep pastures and diminish the quantity of wool, then supposed to be the staple article of the country. They have latterly looked on patiently while *cotton*, the growth of other countries, has overpowered the woollen manufactory, frequently leaving wool, an article for which during three years no demand existed, and the article of wool (the principal means of paying rent in former times) has risen less in proportion than any article of like general use, which can be named?

If the British land proprietors are to be excluded from cheap articles from France and other countries, in favor of the English manufacturers, are not the land proprietors and their tenants and laborers entitled to have French and other foreign corn kept from our ports; when one effect, without looking to other and important conquences of importation, would be that no English corn could for some time be grown without certain loss and ruin to the farmer, and consequently to the landed interest. With what justice can the manufacturers petition at one time against a protecting duty for corn, and at another time complain that the French manufacture can be sold in our markets at a cheaper rate than they can afford the like articles of equal quality?

Why is the greater and more important interest of internal supply, abundance and plenty of our own growth, to be sacrificed to an erroneous or mistaken clamour against the best interests of the country?

There was a period, a proud epoch in our history, and a happy one in our constitution when this subject was better understood, and the country was laying the foundation of her present greatness. Sentiments like these were then thought worthy of the pen of one of the wisest men of the day, Lord Coke, who says,

"*Nota*, reader. It is true that agriculture and tillage is greatly respected and favored, as well by the common law, as by the common assent of the king, lords spiritual and temporal, and all the commons in many parliaments. 1st. The common law prefers arable land before all other, and therefore for its dignity it ought to be named in a *præcipe* before meadow, pasture, wood, or any other soil; and it appears by the statute of 4 H. 7. cap. 19. that

six inconveniencies are introduced by subversion or conversion of arable land into pasture, tending to two deplorable consequences. The first inconvenience is the increase of idleness, the root and cause of all mischiefs. 2. Depopulation and decrease of populous towns and maintenance only of two or three herdsmen, who keep beasts, in lieu of great numbers of strong and able men. 3. Churches for want of inhabitants run to ruin and are destroyed. 4. The service of God neglected. 5. Injury and wrong done to patrons and curates. 6. The defence of the land for want of men strong and enured to labor against foreign enemies, weakened and impaired. The two consequences are: 1. These inconveniences tend to the great displeasure of God. 2. To the subversion of the policy and good government of the land, and all this by the decay of agriculture, which is there said to be one of the greatest commodities of this realm, which one act of parliament as to this purpose may—as a figure in arithmetic, in the third place, stands for an hundred: but I have observed that the most excellent policy and assured means to increase and advance agriculture, is to provide that corn shall be of a reasonable and competent value; for make what statutes you please, if the ploughman has not a competent profit for his excessive labor and great charge, he will not employ his labor and charge without a reasonable gain to support himself and his poor family."

All are ready to exclaim against the impolicy of our gentry passing their time and spending their money in France. They regret the expenditure of 10,000,000*l.* in that country. To import corn from France, or any other country, is to discourage its growth in this country; is to increase the energies and the population of that country in a great measure necessarily and by consequence to the injury of our own country, to give them the best source for a manufacturing capital; and shall this be tolerated to enrich a few merchants embarking large capitals on speculations in corn at the expence of the landed interest in general, and the agricultural community of the country in particular; a community which with its *dependants* and *artisans*, exceeds in number that of the *manufacturing* or mechanic interest, engaged in foreign commerce, as two to one; an interest too which supplies directly and indirectly nine tenth parts of the resources of the country in money for taxes, and by far the most peaceable and virtuous part of our population, and a large portion of our brave soldiers and sailors. Rome experienced, and England may be doomed to feel, the misery of depending on provinces, or on foreign countries for corn, the staff of life!

An aristocratic system of drawing tribute from conquered provinces, in the shape of corn, led to the neglect of Roman husbandry, once the employment of the greatest men, to a degree that

lands produced only a small part of their former returns!! And what is the difference whether our nobility or our idlers spend their money in provisions or lodgings or amusements in France; or whether we import the provisions of that country and the encouragement of their theatres, &c. in the shape of corn? The mischief and the consequences are the same, nay worse; for while the follies of a few or their love of amusement, of novelty or licentiousness, can quickly spend one or two millions a year, without increasing the resources of that country in any great degree, or diminishing our own resources, strength or population, a continual drain from this country, of one or two millions a year, for a series of years, would have the two-fold operation, first, of enriching France and adding to her population, improving her soil, and increasing the activity and energies of her laborers; while, on the other hand, in each article, unless there was a certain regular and profitable commerce between the two countries, the gain of that country would be the loss to this country; and the loss, though computed only at 4,000,000*l.* a year, a sum far short of the mark, would in a century amount at five per cent. compound interest to ; and every statesman should look at remote results, rather than the mere accommodation or convenience of the moment.

Even to lose an active capital of 4,000,000*l.* at the commencement of a century is equal to 400 millions at the end of a century. Thus a national debt may be defied under a proper system, while an error of system may make that debt an overwhelming burthen on the country.

Great as are the mischiefs which have been recounted, they do not stop at this point. The effect of a trade in corn is to put the capitalist in competition with the farming interest; with the poor, and with the rich of that calling; with a large body of men of whom nine-tenths are not prepared to do more, in the very best times, than to pay their rent at the end of the year. Let it be remembered, too, that this was equally and still more the case, when rents were at 2*s.* 6*d.* an acre, as now when they are advanced progressively to 30*s.* an acre. In every parish one or two farmers of wealth and capital may be found. The others subsist from day to day without any means of paying rent, taxes, tithes, or for labor, except by a sale of part of their produce; and frequently the farm yields no other saleable article than corn.

In many parts of Berkshire a flock of sheep, the only stock of the farm, is attended annually with a loss in point of expenditure in order to raise a profitable crop of corn.[1] The like occurs in many parts of Wiltshire. Improved management is however

[1] Mr. Mant's well managed farm, see the evidence before the Commons, produces a profit in corn from the sacrifice of profit from the sheep.

daily gaining proselytes to a better system; to the great profit of the farmer, and the improvement of the condition of his farm, and the increased supply of food for the subsistence of the people.

These little farmers are now to come in competition with the corn merchant; men of great capitals [requiring 20 per cent. profit on each speculation in corn] whose interest it is to make a return of that capital as often as they can within the year! What happens? Does the farmer offer to sell to the merchant at the lowest price at which he can afford to sell his corn? The answer of the merchant is, or if not in terms, is founded on the knowledge, that the merchant can purchase corn cheaper in France, even with the incidental expenses attendant on the importation, than he can in England. The knowledge of this fact leads either to a depreciation in the hands of the English grower, or it excludes him from the assistance of a market with the English merchant. Does not the history of this year abundantly establish this fact?

Let the grower go into the market to sell for himself? In London, and other great cities and populous towns, he has no chance with the English merchant trading in foreign corn. The merchant has the connection with the mealmen, and the mealmen with the millers, and the latter with the bakers. There is a system of credit between them, which induces dependance and commands preference; besides that facility of movement, &c. &c. which is adapted to a large concern, a regular establishment, but which would not suit a small one. To this may be added, that though it be the interest of the English merchant to sell corn after he has imported it, at as high a price as he can obtain, yet it is decidedly for his interest to keep the command of the market; and it is in the nature of his business and of his pursuits to sell perishable articles at all events even at a loss, if he cannot sell at a profit, provided he can lay out his money in a new cargo with a prospect of advantage. His profit will arise and be multiplied by quick returns, by frequent though small profits: and he will rather consider the result of his whole speculation than the profit or loss of any one particular adventure. However the market may fall he will be the seller: thus excluding the British grower from a sale at the fair marketable value of the article. This in the present state of things is the experience of every market day in London, &c. &c. and for inferior corn no market whatever exists.

In a country of more limited market, the demand is so small, when the *coasting* trade is excluded, as it necessarily is by an importing trade from foreign countries, that the excess of the supply does, of itself, produce a reduction of price. A competition between many farmers to be sellers, to a few buyers, and those

on a small scale, will necessarily produce a great reduction in price. This inconvenience is at places distant from markets for large consumption, felt as one of the most serious evils of the importing system: it is the reason why corn is so low in price in markets distant from the metropolis, and from cities and large trading districts; and all the districts bordering on sea ports, are frequently exposed to a like diminution in price by an importation!! [And thus the coast trade is not only excluded, but the farmers in the interior are met by rivals in the provincial markets.]

A capital of one million of money employed by a few men in the importation of corn from our neighbours, and exchanged twelve times in a year, or once in each calendar month, even at a profit of five per cent. on each monthly quantity, would produce an income to the merchants of £600,000, and would effectually ruin the property of the landed proprietors and of the farmers—which may be estimated with respect to the land proprietors at £30 an acre, being £1800,000,000. of money, and as to the farmers at £6 an acre or £360,000,000. Thus this small capital of one million might be made to overpower or at least to paralyse the exertion of those to whom the immense capital of the landed and agricultural interests belong.

It will appear that in these observations, there is a decided leaning towards the agricultural interests. This is acknowledged. The acknowledgment, however, must be coupled with a declaration that this view is taken after a minute examination of the subject on extensive experience, thirty years, in the state of the landed and agricultural interests of this country, with an opportunity of knowing the greater part of the changes of property which have taken place in England and Wales during the last hundred years, and on a thorough conviction that it is impossible to sacrifice the agricultural interest, without corresponding injury to the manufacturing interest, or to the community at large, our revenue or political strength! Whoever may impute to the writer of these observations (for he neither expects or wishes to conceal his name) interested motives in this detail of his sentiments, will form a very erroneous estimate of his prospects. As far as he understands the subject, he would best promote his own advantage, by depreciating the value of land, as the means of employing the fruit of his future labor in purchases at a depreciated rate, more than compensating him for any depreciation of that of which he is the owner. Besides, he would despise himself, could he feel for a moment that he was endeavouring to advance his own interest at the expence of those whom he wishes to reconcile to any particular measure. He cannot see the country injured without feeling that he must bear a full share of the evil!

He has erred greatly in judgment, if in lending his feeble efforts to the improvement of the soil of the country, and diffusing and encouraging a spirit of liberal employment of capital, in the husbandry of that country, he has not been performing a duty, instead of merely pursuing his individual benefit!!

To destroy the present disposition towards improvement, would be to sacrifice the labor of a series of years, and the capital so liberally bestowed in effecting improvements. It would be to bring into question the judgment of our gracious monarch, while enjoying his faculties in unimpaired vigor, and of that great, honest, and patriotic minister, *Mr. Pitt*, who by their encouragement laid the foundation of our agricultural establishments, and our consequent success and improvements; who invited our nobility and our gentry to turn their attention to the improvement of the soil, our husbandry, and our cattle. It would be to impeach the wisdom of the great Prussian Monarch, to whose favour the largest quantity of manure, raised by his nobility on their estates, was the best recommendation; and his wisdom is exemplified in the benefit which his country has derived from this part of his plan for its improvement. It would be to deny the long received aphorism, that he who causes two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before, does more good to society, than he who conquers kingdoms!

To suffer British agriculture to be overpowered at this moment, after the exertions its members have made, and the sacrifices to which they have submitted, and the sums they have expended, to answer the call of the country, and its demand for a greater quantity of subsistence, to feed an increased and increasing population, would be to endanger the chance and to forfeit the hope, of like exertions upon like emergencies. It would be to sacrifice a capital of immense amount, already reduced by a change in times from thirty to fifty per cent. from its former value. The property which was worth £5000, two years since, to a farmer, is worth less to him by £2000 at this day.—Nor would the farmer and the landlord be the only losers. Taxation must feel the change, and it would feel that change in various ways, which do not readily occur to ordinary minds: and they who now treat a reduced price of corn as a blessing, would quickly experience in it one of the greatest evils. Reduce rents of £3 to £2, of £2 to 20s. and of 30s. to 20s. and so on proportionably; or take the average at 10s. per acre, this reduction on 60,000,000 of acres, would be £30,000,000 a year. So much less property in nominal amount would be in circulation from the land proprietor. Take three times that sum (and this is a low comparison) from the price of agricultural produce; this would be £90,000,000 a year, so that there would be a diminished circulation to the extent of 120 millions a year, a sum flow-

ing from solid and substantial sources, and not from speculation—from those who pay the tradesman readily and with certainty.

As most landlords spend all their income, and as tenants spend the greater part of the actual returns from the sale price of corn, &c. &c. some persons must feel the want of this circulation. Whoever examines the history of a guinea during its passages from hand to hand, for a year, may appreciate the mischief and the misery of such a state of things. The finance minister must be aware that a less amount of direct taxes will come into the treasury, from the landlord and the tenant. There would be less property tax, less assessed taxes, besides the loss in indirect taxes. The tithe owner would have a reduced income from his tithes; the lawyer would receive fewer fees, and those fees would be less in amount; for prosperity and affluence promote the assertion of rights, resentment of wrongs, encourage liberality towards the profession of the law, and also the more useful, and at the same time to the lawyer, more profitable, acts of transfer and settlement of property. Medical men would participate in the loss. Mechanics engaged in rural employments, namely, the taylor, the smith, the mason, the carpenter, the cooper, the sadler, the harness-maker, the thatcher, &c. &c. would have less employment; indeed this is already felt, and at reduced rates. Fewer labourers would be employed, and these at lower wages. No cottages would be built, and many would be unoccupied and fall into decay, and that great source of increase and best nursery to population fail.

The great number of poor would be increased with less ability in those, by whom they are to be supported, to afford that support; and the land owners and farmers would be driven to compel the manufacturers to contribute more generally and more extensively to the poor; and it is obvious, that the manufactures bring on the poor rate a much larger burthen than is brought by the agricultural interest: while agriculture flourishes it finds useful and profitable employment for all the poor, even the aged, unless they are incapacitated by sickness, disease, or some particular injury.

Notwithstanding the distresses of the agricultural population, a few manufacturers may say, and there are few only who would say we disregard all this; our labourers will be more numerous, and their wages reduced: we shall grow rich, while the proud landlords our neighbours are growing poor! What a mistaken vanity!!! What a short-sighted policy!!! A few individuals may prosper and grow rich amid this general distress. Every good man will say to himself, *humani nihil a me alienum puto.* Is it for any person's happiness, let him grow ever so wealthy, to be the lord of a deserted village; of a poor tattered, forlorn and distressed tenantry, and of starving cottagers? The man of more enlightened policy and more liberal views must know and will feel, that individual happi-

ness must arise in a great measure from public prosperity; and he can have but a very small enjoyment of life, and little right to that enjoyment, who does not understand that the wealth of the great body of the people, is the best security and protection for the wealth and the happiness of every individual, and of encreased comfort to the poor, and to those who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. To these useful sons of the country, it is not of any consequence what is the price of bread, provided they regularly can earn the means of purchasing it. Besides, a contracted income to the landlord, or to the tenant, must necessarily lead to a diminished expenditure in every branch of trade. In every line of business the loss will be felt. The metropolis in particular would soon become sensible to its situation, of the loss it had sustained in the deprivations of a wealthy proprietorship and of a prosperous tenantry. Do not tradesmen already feel and complain of the deficiency in trade, arising from the system of the two last years? All luxuries and costly elegance must be abandoned by farmers of the superior class. Inferior articles must be worn and used even by them. The rents of houses and lodgings must fall; debts already contracted would, if ever collected, be collected with still greater difficulty than at present and at a protracted period; and even the merchant and manufacturer, with the exception of a few individuals, would feel even in the present day the scourge of increasing poverty, and ultimately, perhaps at no distant period, the dependance on a foreign, a rival, and eventually an hostile country, for articles of the first necessity; on a country possessing all the energies, arising from an increased and flourishing population, bred up with a strong and sinewy arm, strengthened by the use of the plough and the spade, relieved from burthensome taxes and from tythes; opposed to a starving dispirited population, whose enervation was encreased by their habits of living, and still more by the nature of their employment; the loom for the spade and the plough; and the unwholesome atmosphere of a manufactory for healthy employment in the open air.

It greatly imports mechanics and the manufacturers to weigh with themselves the mischief they would experience in having their numbers increased, from the agricultural population; more especially the distress that would be felt by them when a change of European politics, might, in future, as in former times, deprive a large proportion of those engaged in any pursuit, of the employments in which they had been educated. Did the labouring mechanic or artisan or manufacturer know his true interest, he would be the last person to join in a clamour against a law for the protection of British husbandry, (which will not cost any individual for himself more than a half-penny a day, taking the highest rate of increased charge.) On the contrary, he would hail such law as a blessing to

himself, his children and children's children; as a security against famine; as a means of equalizing the price of corn on an average of years; an object of the first importance; and preventing those fluctuations from low to high, and from high to low prices, which are felt with so much distress, are so injurious at times to land owners, and at other times to tenants, and are continual sources of uneasiness to manufacturers and their artisans; rendering it necessary on the part of employers, to contend for a diminution, and on the part of the workmen to contend for an advance of wages. He would see that the price of corn was no otherwise an object to him, than as the means of fixing the rate of his wages, according to a just and equitable standard; affording him all the comforts of life, in the degree and to the extent in which he had a right to enjoy them. He would see also that it was better that there should be employment for all men in their different stations, than that a large proportion of them should be deprived of employment, and be pensioners on parochial rates, and a burthen on an impoverished tenantry, and a neglected soil.

He would be assured, that it was for the interest of his children, if not of himself, that agricultural employment should be open to them, as the situation in which ample scope for labor and profitable employment is afforded, and that our home manufacturers should find good customers in those who are their greatest consumers, and in point of payment most punctual dealers; and that the numerous articles of manufacture for home consumption, should not be neglected or sacrificed to those comparatively few, for they are comparatively few, articles manufactured in this kingdom, which find their market in foreign countries; that the great body of the people, the ancient and venerable proprietors of the soil, should not be compelled to give place or to bend the knee, or to pass under the yoke as mortgagers or sellers for the aggrandizement of the few, who aim at wealth through the medium of the employment of great capitals in trade, or the inordinate thirst for the speculations of commerce. Even though the agriculture of this country should be sacrificed to the more favoured prospects of commerce, is it clear or can it reasonably be expected, that France, though profiting in her agriculture by our supineness and neglect of our soil, would diminish her exertions in her manufactures; in those manufactures in which she is exerting herself to rival this country? On the contrary, it is to be apprehended, that by the increase in her wealth, and consequently in her capital, by the growth and sale of the first necessaries of life, she would become a more successful competitor than she could be if we ceased to give encouragement to her agriculture, by being of necessity the purchasers of her corn. In the work of Mr. Birbeck, we may collect many useful facts and observations to satisfy us, that France is growing into gigantic strength

from agricultural pursuits; and that the rapid improvement in the finances of the country afford evidence, if any were wanting, of the resources which may be drawn from an agricultural population. Statesmen would merely perform their duty if they availed themselves of the excellent observations of the Marquis De Mirabeau, the acknowledged friend of mankind, on this interesting subject. The real point to be decided by Parliament, in its wisdom, is to place such protection around the British grower of corn as shall secure to him a fair competition in the British market, so long, and so long only as he shall be willing to sell corn at a price which would protect him from loss in growing this article of the first necessary of life. This, if done, will be done, not only for the sake of the farmer and the landed interest, but equally for the good of the state and of the community at large; as the only means of avoiding dearth, famine, and all their miserable attendants, and in the mean time dependence on other countries; who though friends to day may be enemies to-morrow; and who in times to come, as in times past, may exact from us our precious metals, the only articles for which they will exchange the necessaries of life; and who will, during peace, be growing provisions at our expence, and in the next war display their strength to our disadvantage.

END OF NO. XIX.

DEFENCE

OF

ECONOMY

AGAINST THE

RIGHT HON. GEORGE ROSE.

BY JEREMY BENTHAM, ESQ.

ORIGINAL.

LONDON.

1817.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WHILE committing to the press so free an examination as this will be found to be, of Mr. Rose's declared *principles*, as published by him on the subject of public expenditure, there would, as it strikes me, be something ungenerous at least, if not unjust in the omission, were I not to make acknowledgment, as, without any communication, direct or indirect, with the Right Honorable Gentleman, I hereby do, of such proofs of due regard for economy as by incidents falling exclusively within my own observation have been furnished by his *practice*. Of the measures alluded to—two in number—both were in a very considerable degree important: one of them, in respect of extent, as well as difficulty, pre-eminently so: and, on both occasions in his instance, as well as that of Mr. Pitt, by such tokens, as in the nature of the case could not have left room for doubt in the mind of any person in any situation, it fell in my way to be assured that a real regard for economy, forming a striking contrast with the mixture of waste, corruption, and dark despotism which in one of the two cases has since been exemplified, was an actuating motive: and that with the spontaneously expressed desire of receiving those suggestions, which, had not circumstances above their control stood in the way, would accordingly have been received, any such design on the parts of either of them, as that of giving on the particular occasions in question, any such increase as, on one of those occasions has since been given, to corruptive influence, was plainly incompatible.

As to the tract itself, with the exception of a few inconsiderable verbal alterations, which the nature of the case necessitated, it is exactly in the state in which it was written; which was in the months of April and May 1810.

DEFENCE OF ECONOMY,

&c. &c.

I.—*Introduction.*

HAVING taken my leave of the departed orator, I have now to pay my obeisance to the surviving statesman; who, though in the line of politics not always conjoined with him, will, in the track of principle, be on the ground here in question, found, as there has already been occasion to observe, separated from him by no great distance.

For principles such as on this same ground may serve as a standard for comparison, I must, on this occasion, as on that other, take leave to refer the reader to these closely compressed thoughts, which are about to take their chance for obtaining a small portion of his notice.

For the convenience of such persons whose taste or whose disposable time shrinks from any such mass as would be formed in the union of all *three* papers, I detach in advance these two parts from that which had been intended to precede them. But forasmuch as throughout this *third* part, reference, either express or tacit, is all along unavoidably made to the principles laid down in the postponed part, and enforced by that by which this one has now lately been preceded;[1] I find myself in this respect reduced to the necessity of supposing, or at least writing as I should do, if I supposed the postponed, as well as the already published part, to have already made its experiment upon the reader's patience.

In the production of *Edmund Burke*, the quantity of matter taken for the subject of examination, was that which happened to be contained between the 62d and 68th pages, both inclusive. Within the pages designated by the same numbers, happens to be contained the only part of Mr. Rose's work, to which the like

[1] In the *Pamphleteer*, No. XVII. January 1817.

tribute of unremitted attention has on the present occasion been paid.

A coincidence rather more material, is—that of the *discrepancy*, not to say the *repugnancy*, which in this instance as in *that*, will, if I do not greatly deceive myself, be seen to have place. By the one architect as by the other, to the same virtue, viz. *economy*, a temple erected in the first part, beaten down in the second.[1]

II.—*Mr. Rose's Pleas in bar to Economy—Plea* 1. *Vastness of the Expenditure.*

1. The first of his pleas thus pleaded, in bar to any defalcations that might be proposed to be made from the mass of public burdens, is that which, with that ingenuity which will not pass unobserved, has been made out of the very magnitude of the mass.

"The whole revenue of Great Britain, says the Right Honorable Gentleman, (p. 62.) is more than 60,000,000*l.* a year; the charge on which of 242,000*l.* for pensions and sinecure employments at home and abroad, is between three farthings and one penny in the pound. By the extinction, therefore, of all sinecures and pensions, a person paying taxes to the amount of 50*l.* a year, would save about 4*s.*; such a saving continues he, *we* (who are *we?*) are far from thinking should be treated as trifling or insignificant, it would ill become *the author* to do so: on the other hand, how infinitely short would this fall of the expectation that has been held out.

"But if," continues he, "from the total sum received from *sinecures, places, and pensions*, deduction were made of such as have been given as rewards for public services, the amount would be very greatly reduced; pensions to foreign ministers in particular, whose appointments are hardly in any instance sufficient for their maintenance."

It is to "*sinecures and pensions*" alone, that this argument has, by the ingenious author, been applied, to the extra pay of over-paid places, not: but, applying as it does to both branches of expenditure, and with equal force, it would be wronging the argument not to give to both of them the full benefit of it.

[1] As to the *method* pursued in the present instance—whether it was that by the statesman in question, no such elaborate art, having *here*, as there, been employed in wrapping up peccant matter in splendid language—or in short, howsoever it happened, so it has happened that the course taken on that occasion by the commentator, so far as concerns the prefixing *interpretations* to *text*, has not been pursued here. But, to avoid all design, as well as charge of mis-representation, the same care that was taken there has been continued here, viz. that of not hazarding in any instance any thing in the shape of a *comment*, without laying at the same time before the reader, in the very words, whatever passage served or contributed to form the ground of it.

Now, true it is, that were this argument to be received in the character here proposed for it, it would, it must be confessed, be a very convenient one, and save others in abundance. For every 4*s.* a year which you wish to give away without any public use, contrive to spend 50*l.* a year, for which such a use or the appearance of such a use can be found, and your justification is then made.

Meantime, some reasoners there are, to whom the contrary inference would appear the more reasonable one: unnecessary or even necessary, the heavier the mass of our burdens is already, the less able are we to bear any addition to it, or even this or that existing part of it.

In my own view of the matter, I must confess the consideration of the magnitude of the mass, is a consideration to which, on a question such as the present, there can be no necessity nor any great use in recurring.

Whatsoever it be that at the expense of the people, is by the trustees of the people, given to this or that individual without equivalent, and that an adequate one, I mean without either receiving or reasonable expectation of receiving on account of the public a preponderate advantage, is so much *waste*,—and if given with eyes open to the misapplication of it, so much *peculation*.

When by *indictment* a man is prosecuted for theft, or by bill in equity for a breach of trust in the way of peculation, that, of the pecuniary circumstances of the party to whose prejudice the act of dishonesty has operated, any account should be taken, is never looked upon as necessary, or so much as admissible. And not being so on that individual scale, I see not why it should be so on this all-comprehensive scale.

But if so it were, that I found myself under an obligation of bringing this topic to view, it seems to me, that in the vastness of the existing burdens, I should be more apt to view an argument for decreasing it, than either for giving increase to it, or so much as keeping it from decrease.

The misfortune is, that without being thus expressed, this consideration has in experience operated, and with too much effect, in disposing the people to acquiesce without remonstrance, under unnecessary pressure. Turn over the book of history, you will find that the heavier the burdens have been with which the people have been loaded, the greater the facility that has been found for rendering the load still heavier: or, what comes to the same thing, look backward, and you will find that the more considerable the load they had been accustomed to, the greater was the difficulty that was experienced in persuading them to submit, though it were but for a year or two, to any addition to it.

If as the facility of engaging them to submit to increased burdens increased, the suffering produced by those burdens diminished,

this disposition of mind would be as desirable as it is natural: but unfortunately this is not the case. By heaping law taxes upon law taxes, and law fees upon law fees, you may ruin a thousand families one year, two thousand the next year, and so on: and, the greater the number that are thus ruined, the better enabled and the better satisfied will the man of finance and the man of law be to go on receiving more and more: it will be to both of them as it has been to both of them, and *to both in one, a motion of course;* but it does not appear, or (to speak intelligibly to learned gentlemen) *non constat,* that when the number thus ruined is two thousand, the affliction is to each or any of them lighter than when the number was but one thousand.

For forming a gag to stop complaints in the mouth of the party tormented, as well as *a callus* to case the heart of the tormentor, precedent is indeed a mighty good thing; and the more manifold the precedent the more effective the gag, as well as the harder the callus: and the latter use is that to which these several pleas against economy, and this first plea in particular, seems more especially destined and adapted. The misfortune is, that by the callus formed round the one heart, the affliction that rends the other is not assuaged.

Oh, but sir, (cries somebody) what is it you are about all this while? and how sadly have you been misrepresenting the Right Honorable Gentleman! Here are you imputing to him this sad purpose, and that immediately after having read and passed over (fie upon you) a paragraph in which he tells you *himself* the purpose he had in view, and that a very different one.

True it is that I have read that paragraph; but as to the purpose spoken of in it, I feel myself under a sort of embarrassment which I shall proceed to state.

"The opinion already alluded to" (says the paragraph, p. 62.) "as prevailing *to a certain extent,* that if sinecures and pensions were entirely suppressed, the burdens of the country would be *instantly lightened to a great amount,* and by some entertained that they would in that case be *removed altogether,* renders it *necessary* that a comparison should be made of the before-mentioned total, (viz. of sinecures and pensions) large as it is, with the amount of the taxes raised upon the people."

Now then—what is *expressly* averred here is—that an opinion to the purpose in question is "*prevailing to a certain extent.*"

What seems to be insinuated—I should rather say—what from the idea of "*necessity*" thus brought to view, some readers might be apt to imagine is—that the purpose the Right Honorable Gentleman had in view, was only the setting the *people* right in respect of this supposed prevalent error, and not the persuading the im-

posers of public burdens to consider the enormity of the mass as affording an argument for not diminishing it.

Now then as to this supposed error; what seems to me is, that it must have been in some vision or some dream, and no where else, that any person not in the care of a keeper, could have presented themselves to the conception of the Right Honorable Gentleman, as entertaining it. The interest of the debt paid without money—the expense of the army defrayed without money—the expense of the navy defrayed without money—all this, not to speak of any thing more, must have been believed by any person, in whose mind any such opinion should prevail, as that if sinecures and pensions were suppressed, the burdens of this country would be removed altogether.

Another thing that passes my comprehension is, how should it be that, supposing them to have found "*to a certain extent*" whatever that extent be—that is to a certain *number*, whatever that number be, a set of people among whom any such opinion was prevalent, how it should be that it should have entered into their conception, otherwise than in dream or vision, as above, that for the purpose of setting right any such people, and weaning them from their error; there could be either necessity or use, in bringing forward any such ingenious and accurate calculation as that which has just been seen, and which he was thereupon immediately about to treat us with: as if, supposing the existence of any such swine, such pearls could be of any the smallest use to them!

If to so Right Honorable a Gentleman any thing could be attributed, that would bear any such appellation as that of *artifice*, (no, I will not call it *artifice*, I will call it *astutia*—and then every thing will be as it should be) what, on an occasion such as this, one should be tempted to suppose, is, that the agreement thus brought forward, and put in front of the battle, was the result of a *consultation* with some learned, or quondam learned, as well as Right Honorable or Honorable Gentlemen, profoundly learned in that superior and purer branch of the law called *equity*; one of the rules of which is, that in the drawing of the initiative instrument called *a bill*, to entitle yourself to ask a question of the defendant, you must in the first place impute to him, the having told some story or other, no matter how extravagant, which he never told, to serve him in the character of a "*pretence*" for defrauding the orator (your client) of his due; he himself neither having heard of the defendant's ever saying any such thing, nor believing him to have ever said it; which falsehood having thus with all due regularity been come out with, serves by way of licence, as well as introduction, to whatsoever other falsehoods, mixt with whatsoever truths, it may have been deemed convenient to introduce.

III.—*Plea 2. Need of Provision for decayed Nobility, &c.*

2. The next plea is that which is founded on the alleged necessity of making provision for noble and respectable families fallen into decay.

"The pension list," (continues the Right Honorable Advocate, p. 63.) "also contains provisions for *noble and respectable families* fallen into decay; this is, however," (continues he) "an exertion of *national generosity*, if not of *justice*, which *the most scrupulous economist* will hardly consider as improper. Something," (continues he) "must certainly be allowed for mere favor; but when the instances are *clearly improper*, (and it is not meant to contend there are no such) they are at least open to public animadversion; as they are now *regularly laid before parliament*, and printed from time to time, *which certainly affords a considerable, if not an effectual check against abuse.*"

Thus far the Right Honorable Gentleman. For my own part I am doomed to fall into sad disgrace with him. The conception entertained by him of any "*the most scrupulous*" sort of person, in the character of an "*economist*," is far outstripped by me. Under what denomination it may be my lot to fall in his black dictionary, I know not; if it were that of Jacobin or Leveller, it would be no surprise to me.

Of the sort of *justice*, which can so much as *permit*, not to speak of *commanding*, any such disposal of public money, I have no conception, nor yet of generosity, unless it be of that pernicious and hypocritical sort, which gratifies itself at the expence of justice.

My protest is in the first place against the *principle*; as being founded on oppressive extortion, and breach of trust; as affording encouragement to extravagance, and to every vice that is fed by extravagance; as being still unjustifiable, even though there were a certainty of its not having either vice or extravagance for its consequence any more than for its cause.

My next objection is to the *amount*; as being without limit; as scorning all limit: and being of itself capable of effecting a revolution in the state of *property*, if it did not, in a revolution in the state of *power*, find a preventive remedy.

I. In the first place as to *principle*.

Now, to a provision of the sort in question, what is it that, according to the Right Honorable Gentleman's law, is to constitute a man's title? It is "*decay*;"—mere decay;—the having *fallen into decay*; i. e. the being at the time in question in a state of indigence. Mark well, that to indigence at that degree, to which the next degree is death, or at least disease, his argument does not

look; for indigence in that shape, provision is made already—made to wit by the species of tax called the *Poor Rates:* a tax which, even by the Right Honorable Gentleman himself, on whose feelings public burdens sit thus lightly, has never been spoken of as a light one.

This provision then is not the sort and degree of provision he has in view: of the sort and degree of provision which he has in view, what more adequate or unexceptionable description can be given, than that which has been given in and by his own words? for "*noble*" families, then it must be *noble*, for "*respectable*" families it must be *respectable*.

Against provision of even the scantiest kind, an objection that by many has been regarded as a peremptory one, is, that it operates as a provision for idleness and extravagance. By myself any more than by the Right Honorable Gentleman it has never been regarded in that light; not seeing that so long as it is confined to what is absolutely necessary to keep a person alive and free from disease, and given on condition of working, where work can be made profitable, (and beyond this I undertake not for the defence of it) subsistence is capable of acting to any preponderantly formidable extent in that character: and considering that, without some such provision, multitudes there are, that by infirmity, the result of infamy, or decrepitude, or disease, would without any default of their own, be exposed to perish, and would accordingly perish, by lingering disease or famine.

But by any such provision, neither the *generosity* of the Right Honorable Gentleman, nor so much as his *justice* is to be satisfied; for *noble* families satisfied it never can be by any thing less than a *noble* provision: for *respectable families* by any thing less than a *respectable* one.

In the provision already made by law—a provision neither limited, nor, unfortunately for the country, capable of being limited, some have viewed a gulph capable, of itself, of swallowing up one of these days the whole produce of national industry. Of any such disaster I have not for my own part any serious apprehension; but, of the *generosity* of the Right Honorable Gentleman, or by whatever other name this article in the catalogue of his virtues be to be called, of this virtue, if once admitted to operate, and in the character of a *principle* set the law to practice, I cannot but regard this catastrophe as an inevitable consequence.

II. For now let us think a little of the *amount:* and to this the Right Honorable Gentleman has not attempted to set any limits. Vain indeed would have been any such attempt; the principle scorns all limits. Taken by itself, nobility, had *that* been the only source of demand on this score, would not have scorned all limits. Noble families for example, so many:—in each family, generations

reckoning downwards from each peer, to be regarded as still *noble*, so many:—minimum of the pension to each individual in a state of decay, according to the rank occupied by the family in the scale of the peerage, is so much.—Here would have been one exercise for the Right Honorable Gentleman's skill in figures.

But neither for the Right Honorable Gentleman's *generosity*, nor for his *justice*, is it enough, that for *noble* families in decay a *noble* provision be thus kept up; for *respectable* families in the same state there must moreover be a *respectable* one. Here all powers of calculation, even those of the Right Honorable Gentleman, would find themselves at a stand.

For the moment, let me take the liberty of proposing for them an analogous, though a somewhat different exercise.

By the taxes, as they stand at present—(I presume it is out of taxes, and not out of heaven-dropped manna or heaven-dropped quails, that, according to his plan, the *noble* and the *respectable* provision would be to be made)—by the taxes, as they stand at present, a certain number of families are every year pressed down from a state of independence into a state of pauper and parochially supported indigence. Now then, for every branch of a noble and respectable family, which by the noble or respectable provision respectively, is kept above indigence, meaning, that which to the noble or respectable family would have been indigence, how many branches that, without being either noble or respectable, or as yet independent, would be pressed down into that which really is indigence. If *thought* be too much to ask for, a *calculation* of this sort from a right honorable hand, in which figures are so plenty, and so much at command, might, at any rate, be not undeserving, it is hoped, of a few figures.

Another exercise for the mathematics of the Right Honorable Gentleman. The *respectable* families let them for the moment be laid out of the question—let the calculation still confine itself to the *noble* ones.

After observation taken of the rate of the increase given to nobility by his still present Majesty, or even of that part of it that was given with the advice of the Right Honorable Gentleman's departed hero, let him, with *Cocker* in his hand, carry on the increase through a portion of future contingent time. Considering that neither Scotland, nor Ireland, nor any thing that is noble in either kingdom, can on this occasion be left out of the account, let him inform us what are the number of years that will have elapsed antecedently to that point of time at which the amount of the provision made on his plan for *noble decay*, will have outstripped that of the provision at the same time made for ignoble indigence.

"Oh, but you are confounding *classes*—you are confounding *species*. This is the way with you *jacobins* and you *levellers*. You

confound every thing. The noble and respectable families are of *one* species: the ignoble and unrespectable families are of *another*. The ignoble and unrespectable families are of the species that *are sent* to *Walcheren;* the noble and respectable families are of the species that *send them* there. The families whose branches are to be preserved from decay, are those whose *feelings* have a right to be consulted: the families that are to be helped on in the road to ruin, are those whose feelings have no such right."

A smile beams upon the countenance of the Right Honorable gentleman. He calls for his *extinct peerage:* he foresees his triumph: he beholds the confusion of the jacobin; when, at the end of the calculation, it has been made as plain as figures can make any thing, how many centuries will have elapsed before any such outstripping can have taken place.

Well then; having, by the success of the operation thus performed upon the *noble* families, given vigor to his hand, let him try it upon the *respectable* ones.

What has just been seen, is what the Right Honorable Gentleman has not any where said. True:—but it is what (I fear much) from the beginning of his pamphlet to the end of it, is but too much like what he has thought.

"Something"—(says the Right Honorable Gentleman, such is his candor) "something must certainly be allowed for mere favor." Good sir, you already forget your own argument: it is all mere favor, or it is none. "Decay," not service, "decay," not merit in any shape, real or imagined, was your title: decay, by what cause soever produced, as well as in whatsoever quantity; produced by eating and drinking,—produced by carrying about seraglios in foreign missions,—produced by horse-racing,—produced by dice or E. O., is decay less decay? is nobility the less noble? is respectability (I mean your sort of respectability—the respectability which consists in having or spending money of one's own or other people's) the less respectable?

Talk of justice and injustice. So long as any *one* individual is, whether on the score of *nobility*, or of *respectability*, preserved in this way from decay, it is not mere disfavor, it is no better than mere *injustice*, to refuse it to any *other*.

"But where the instances are clearly improper, and it is not meant," continues the Rt. Honorable Gentleman, "to contend that there are no such, they are at least open to public animadversion." Good sir, once more your candor carries you too far. What *you* do not mean to contend for, I must, even I; indeed, sir, there are not any such *instances:* your principle admitted, there *cannot* be any.

"*They are at least open to public animadversion.*" Your pardon, sir; indeed they are not. *Individually* they are not: they are not common: to the "public" two things altogether necessary to the

purpose are wanting, viz. *information* and time. Mr. Brown has 1,200*l.* a year: two Miss Vandals have 600*l.* Who knows who this Mr. Brown or those Miss Vandals are? At the moment when the necessity of providing for noble or respectable decay in the person or persons of this Mr. Brown or these Miss Vandals, has by some noble or right honorable person been whispered into the royal ear, the whisperer knows: but the next moment nobody knows. Even now there are more of them than the public patience can endure so much as to *count:* and shall we talk of *scrutiny?* More than can be so much as counted even now! and what shall we say when, your principle being in full operation, there are with us in England, as you know when there were in France, enough of them to fill a *red book,* and *that,* like the army list, no small book, of themselves.

No, sir: individually open to public animadversion they are not, even now: much less at the time in question would they be. But in the lump, in the principle on which they are proposed to be multiplied, and that to infinity, they are "*open to animadversion:*" and on this consideration it is that the presumption, betrayed by the present weak and inadequate attempt at "animadversion," has found its cause.

On the *wing,* who can think to catch, who can so much as follow, all such wasps? But in the *egg,* if the people have but spirit enough, they may be crushed.

"Something" (says the candor of the Right Honorable Gentleman) must be allowed for mere *favor.*" Yes: and something must also be allowed for an affection of an opposite nature. This candor of his shall not go unrequited: it shall be paid for in the same coin. If *profusion* be, as it appears to be, all that is meant by "the abuse," a check that abuse "certainly" has;—and that check but *too* "*certainly*" is "*considerable,*" though unhappily it is far from being "*an effectual*" one. Of itself, *profusion,* were that the whole of the disorder, would have no check: but, complicated as it is with another disorder, *corruption,* in that other disorder, odd as the case may seem at the first mention of it, it does find a sort of a check: the *diarrhœa* finds in the *septic* diathesis a sort of astringent.

The paradox will disappear immediately. When it happened that the Right Honorable Gentleman, by whom the case of the *sprig* of *decayed nobility or respectability* had been submitted to *royal* "generosity" or *royal* "justice," had been voting on the *improper* side, the instance (could any such hopeless intrusion be supposed on the part of the Right Honorable Gentleman) would be one of the *clearly improper* ones, and the decay would be left to its own natural course. When so it happened that on all occasions the patron had *properly* understood, as in duty, I mean in loyalty, every such patron is bound to understand, what on each occasion

is the proper side, the decay would find its *proper* preservative, and the profusion would be left to the operation of that check, with the virtue of which the Right Honorable Gentleman is so nearly satisfied; I mean, that "*certainly considerable, if not effectual check*" *against abuse*, which is "afforded" by the pensions forming, when the mischief is past remedy, part and parcel of that almost completely unintelligible, and effectually inscrutable, mass of information or non-information, which is "now" *so regularly laid before parliament.*"

IV.—*Plea 3. Need of Subsistence for Official Persons.*

3. A third plea is that which is composed of the alleged non-excess, or even insufficiency, of official incomes.

"If we look to official incomes, it will be found they are in most cases" (says the Right Honorable Gentleman) "barely equal to the *moderate*, and even the *necessary* expenses of the parties: in many instances they are *actually* insufficient for these."

Under the modest guise of a plea *against retrenchment*, we have here a plea *for increase*, and that again an inexhaustible one.

In this plea, *two* points present a more particular call for observation.

One consists in the *indefiniteness*, and thence in the *universality* of the terms by which the *incomes* in question, and thence the *incomists* are designated. By "*official incomes*," unless some word of limitation be annexed—and no such word is annexed—must be understood *all* official incomes. Less than *all* cannot be meant; for, if any thing less be meant, the argument falls short of its undissembled purpose. In most cases, scantiness being asserted, and in many, insufficiency—and that even without a view to the single purpose of a bare subsistence, whether there be any of these incomes that are *more* than "barely equal" to that object, is left to conjecture.

2. The other the word *necessary*, viz. in the application here made of it to a mass of expenses that are to be defrayed at the public charge: an aggregate composed of the several individual expenditures of all these several official persons; and when the present Mr. Rose comes to be in the situation (poverty excepted) of the late Mr. Pitt, let any one calculate, whose skill in calculation is equal to the task, how many are the hundreds of thousands, not to say the millions, a year, that will depend on the construction of these two words.

To assist us in this calculation, an example, though unfortunately but one, has been afforded us by the Right Honorable Gentle-

man: and, so far as this carries us, it will appear that, even where by the frugality of the Right Honorable Gentleman, it is confined to what is "*necessary*," (the inflexibility of this virtue not suffering it to rise to so high a pitch as even to be "*moderate*") what, in speaking of an official person, is meant by his *expense*, is composed of the official income, whatever it be, which he finds provided for it by law, together with a capital to the amount of between eight and nine years' purchase of it, or reckoning by the year, about 25 per cent. upon it, the person's own patrimony if he happens to have any, included or not included. But of this under another head.[1]

V.—*Plea* 4. *Need of Money for making Fortunes for Official Persons and their families.*

4. The next plea is that which is founded on the alleged necessity of enabling persons in official situations—all persons in all official situations—to provide for their families at the public expense.

"May we not *then* venture to ask" (continues the argument from the passage last quoted), "may we not *then* venture to ask whether it is *reasonable*, or whether it would be *politic*, that such persons should, after spending a great part of their lives with *industry, zeal, and fidelity*, in the discharge of trusts and public duties, be left afterwards without reward of any sort, and their families entirely without provision?"

The skill of the Right Honorable Gentleman in *arithmetic* is above, far above, dispute; but, if we may venture to say as much, his *logic* seems to be not altogether upon a par with it.

His *antecedent*, as delivered in the last preceding sentence, is that the "official income" of the official man is "in many instances insufficient," even for his necessary expenses, meaning his necessary *current* expense; and in this next sentence the *consequent* or *conclusion* drawn, is that, in plain English and to speak out, he ought to be enabled to make his fortune always at the public expense; and that to so good a purpose, that after his decease his family may in respect of current expenses, so long as it continues, find itself—in what plight? in the same plight (we are left to conclude) or thereabouts, as its founder, the official man himself.

As to the being preserved as long as it lasts, preserved in all its branches, from decay, that any such provision would be short of the mark, though not to what degree short of the mark, is what we are assured of; for if the family of an official person be a respectable family, (and if not, what family can be a respectable

[1] Chap. 9.

one?) if this be admitted, "trusts," or no trusts, "public duties," or no public duties; the being kept in a state of perpetual preservation from decay is a right that, in the preceding paragraph, has been claimed for them by the Right Honorable Gentleman's "*generosity*," supported by his *justice*.

The form of the argument is indeed rather of the rhetorical than the logical cast—*May we not venture to ask?* The answer is, good sir, no apology—ask boldly: but ask one thing at a time. First, let us make up the deficiency in respect of current and present expenses, and as the supply we are to provide for these "discharges of trusts and duties" is to keep pace with their expenditure—with the expenditure of each and every of them (for your "generosity" makes no exception) "*may we not then venture to ask*," on our parts, for a little breathing time? If so, then, after we have taken breath a little, will be the time for entering on the further employment you have found for us: viz. the making provision for the families of those official, and *therefore* meritorious persons, whose "*industry, zeal*, and *fidelity*," as we have not the honor of being acquainted with them, it is impossible for us to dispute.

To this industry, zeal, and fidelity, the "reward" which your generosity and justice, your reason and your "policy" have in store for them, is doubtless to be proportioned: for otherwise those virtues of theirs, would, as to a part of them more or less considerable, be left without reward—(virtue left without its reward!) and as, in the estimate to be formed of the degree in which these several virtues will, by the several official, and therefore meritorious, persons be displayed, your "*policy*," under the guidance of your "generosity," will not find itself under any restraint; the quantity of the reward will be as little in danger of finding any such limits as would pinch and straiten it.

The "insufficiency" of their respective "official incomes," for the respective "necessary expenses" of these officially industrious, zealous, and "faithful" persons—as such is the title on which the "generosity," "justice," "reasonableness," and "policy" of the Right Honorable Gentleman rests their right to have their "necessary expenses" defrayed for them, and at the same time their fortunes made for them; and as no other man can be so good a judge of what is necessary for a man as the man himself is, there is a sort of comfort in the reflection—how small the danger is, that, upon the principles and plans of the Right Honorable Gentleman, virtue, in any such shape at least as that of "industry, zeal, and fidelity," (meaning always official ditto) will be left without its reward. Having got your official situation, you spend in it so much a year as you find necessary. Having so done, thus, and *then*, is it that you have entitled yourself to the benefit of the Right Honorable Gentleman's conclusion—his logical conclusion,

embellished and put into the dress of a rhetorical *erotesis*; that you are entitled to receive out of the taxes as much more as will secure to your "family" that "provision" which, in virtue of your "*industry, zeal,* and *fidelity,*" speaking without partiality, or with no other "*partiality*" than that which, according to the Head-Master[1] in the school of official economy is a kind of justice, it appears to you to deserve.

After so exemplary a pattern of diffidence as has been set by a Right Honorable Gentleman, whose grounds for confidence are so manifest and so unquestionable, a plain man who feels no such grounds, nor any grounds, for any such pleasurable sensation, can scarce muster up enough of it to put a question of any kind, for fear of being thought encroaching: but, if any one would save me harmless from that charge, I would venture to ask whether it may not have been by a too unqualified adherence to these principles, a too rigid adherence to these precepts, of the two great masters, and without taking the benefit of those precautionary instructions, which the prudence or even the example of one of them might, if sufficiently studied, have furnished them with, that their Right Honorable friend Mr. Steele, and the Honorable Mr. Villiers, and till the other day Honorable Mr. Hunt, and the gallant general Delancy, and the "*industrious, zealous, and faithful*" Mr. John Bowles, with *his* et cæteras, and so many other et cæteras, were led into those little inaccuracies, which time after time have afforded matter of so much, though happily as yet fruitless, triumph to Jacobins, levellers, and parliamentary reformers?

It is necessity alone, and not inclination, that in the performance of the task I have set myself in the school of economy, so frequently imposes upon me so great a misfortune as that of being seen to differ from so great a master as the Right Honorable Gentleman: and accordingly wherever I am fortunate enough to be able to descry between us any thing like a point of coincidence, it is with proportionable eagerness that I lay hold of it, and endeavor to make the most of it.

His plan is—that "official persons," among whom, for the purpose in question, he includes (I presume) persons proposed or proposing themselves for official situations, should determine for themselves what mass of emolument is sufficient for their own expenses, and what for the expenses of their respective families, in present and in future. Now, thus far this is exactly my plan. Thus far then we are agreed; but now comes the unfortunate difference.

My plan (it will be seen) is, that having formed his own calculations, each candidate, in taking his determination, should take it

[1] Burke, 65.

once for all: and moreover, that, as in the case of *stores*, in which instance, instead of skilful labour itself, the produce of skilful labour has, with such well-grounded approbation on the part of the Right Honorable Gentleman, been, ever since the time he speaks of[1] regularly furnished for the public service, there should be a "*competition*;" whereupon that one of them, whose judgment concerning what is sufficient for *him and his*, is most favorable to the public interest, should (unless for, and to the extent of, special cause to the contrary) be accepted.

Thus far my plan. But, according to the Right Honorable Gentleman's, the accepted candidate, who without any such competition is to be accepted, viz. in consideration of that "*industry, zeal, and fidelity*," which will be so sure of being found in him—this accepted candidate, after his calculation has been formed, and the office, with its emolument, taken possession of, is to have the convenience of remaining at liberty to correct by the light of experience (as we shall see[2] the illustrious chief and pattern of all official men did) any such errors as the calculation shall from time to time have been found to contain in it. By this practical test, having ascertained what is "*necessary*" for his own present expenses, he will have put himself in a condition to determine, and ought accordingly to stand charged with the "*trust and duty*" of determining, what further provision will be necessary for the "*necessary expenses*" of his family, considered in its several branches, present and future contingent, for and during the continuance of that portion of time called *future time*.

Another unfortunate difference is—that according to my plan, no exclusion, either express or implied, is put upon such candidates to whom it may happen to have property or income of their own: unable as I am to discover any such office, for the "*trusts and duties*" of which, any such property or income can reasonably be considered as constituting, in any point of view, a ground of disqualification, or to understand, how it can be that a hundred a year should, in the case of its being a man's own *private* money, go less far towards the destroying the "*necessary expenses*" of *him and his*, than if it were so much *public* money received in the shape of official emolument out of the public purse. What, in regard to *my* official man, my plan accordingly assumes, is,—either that he has more or less property of income of his own, or (what in my view comes to much the same thing) what, if any thing, remains to the official situation, after the offer made by him, in relation to it, has been accepted, is, in his own judgment, sufficient for his "*expenses*," "*necessary*" and unnecessary, upon every imaginable score.

[1] p. p. 29, 30. [2] Infra, §. 9.

Of this assumption, that which seems all along to have been proceeded upon by the Right Honorable Gentleman's plan, is exactly the reverse.

True it is, that no *disqualification Act*, excluding from official situations all such persons as shall have either property or income, is any where proposed by him;—no, nor is so much as any recommendation given by him to the wisdom of the crown in the choice it makes of persons for filling these situations, to act as if a law to some such effect were in force. But, all along, the supposition proceeded and argued upon by him is—that there exists not in the quarter in question, any such relatively superfluous matter: a state "*entirely without provision*" is the state in which "*afterwards*," to wit, after "*a great part of his life spent*" by the official person "in the discharge of trusts and duties," his "*family*" is spoken of as being "*left*:" and it is upon this supposition that at least the "*policy*" of the Right Honorable Gentleman (not to speak of his humanity) grounds itself in the appeal it makes to that same endowment, which he beholds as fixed in the breasts of those Honorable persons for whose use this lesson of economy is designed. Would it be "*reasonable*"—would it be "*politic*," are the questions which on this occasion he asks leave to "*venture to ask*."

§. VI. *Plea 5. Need of Money for buying Men off from Professions.*

A fifth plea is composed of the alleged necessity of buying off men from private pursuits: in other words, of the want of "wisdom" there would be in failing to allow to official men—to all official men—in the shape of official emolument, as much money, at the least, as any body can gain "by trade or manufactures."

"It would hardly" (says he p. 64.) "be *wise*, on *reflection*, to establish a *principle*, which would have a *tendency* at least to exclude from the service of their country men likely to be useful to it. Great numbers of those who engage in trade and manufacture (than whom none are held in greater estimation by the author), or who enter into various professions, frequently acquire very large fortunes" (very true indeed), "and seldom, if they have talents and perseverance, fail to obtain independence. What fairness, justice, or reason, is there then in marking the character of the official man alone with disrespect, and himself as unfit to have reward in any case, beyond an annual stipend for his labour and services, just sufficient for his current expenses, however faithfully and diligently he may have discharged an important trust for a long series of years?" "Surely" (concludes he) "it is not unwise or unreasonable that the public should be in a situation to *bid* to a limited extent for talents,

in competition with other honorable and lucrative professions, and various branches of trade and manufactures."

Thus far the Right Honorable Author:—as for the obscure commentator, perplexity is once more his fate. The Right Honorable Author speaks of a *principle*: a principle which, such as it is, he disapproves of. But what this principle is, the obscure commentator can no otherwise take his chance for declaring aright, than by a very random guess.

The omitting in the instance of an official person to make for his family a provision, such as *he* (the official person) or the Right Honorable Author, or somebody else (and who else?) shall pitch upon as being "*necessary*," and, according to the just-described plan of estimation, *sufficient*? An omission to this effect is it the thing to which, by the style and title of a "*principle*," the Right Honorable Gentleman, "*on reflection*," means to attach the *censure* (for gentle and considerate as it is, it is still a *censure*)—attached to it, viz. by saying of it that "it would hardly be wise?" Yes; this must be it: at any rate, it is the nearest approach to it that the perplexed commentator is able to make.

But, of this *principle*, which "*it would hardly be wise to establish*," though unfortunately we have no such specific and particular description, as (were it only to save us from wishing to see an unwise principle established) we cannot but wish for, we have at any rate a general description, viz. such a description as is given of it by the designation, its imputed *tendency*;—and that in so many words:—"a principle" (says he) "which would have a *tendency* at least to exclude from the service of their country men likely to be useful to it."

Now in this *principle*, if so it be that the perplexed commentator has succeeded in his humble endeavours to pierce the cloud that covers it; in this principle we have another measure of the quantity of emolument which on this single score, not to speak at present of any other—on this one account, viz. that of money to be employed in making the fortunes of their respective families, the Right Honorable Author, did it depend on him, would, in the situation of minister, annex to office,—annex to *every* office.

Let us distinguish what requires to be distinguished. What, under the last head, we learned, was one of the *purposes* for which the official emolument was necessary. What, under this head, we receive, is a sort of standard of reference, from which the quantity of that necessary emolument may be estimated, and finally set down in figures. True it is that, on the present occasion, not that same purpose but a fresh purpose is named and brought to view; *there*, the purpose was, enabling the official man to make his family; *here*, it is—enabling a man, not as yet official,

to become such by buying him off from other pursuits; from all pursuits, how lucrative soever, in any one of which, if not thus bought off, it might have happened to him to engage.

But, if the quantity allowed for this fresh purpose (viz. the *buying off* purpose) be ample enough, (and the necessity of not being niggardly on this score will be no secret)—the consequence is, that by the help of a little economy, such as at the hands of so enlightened a professor of economy it might not be too much to venture to ask for, one and the same mass of money might be made to serve both purposes. The reason is—that on the occasion of the two purposes, two different *periods* are in question: viz. that of *possession*, and that of *expectancy*. When actually in possession, whatsoever it be that is necessary to a man, for the good purpose (whatever it be) which is in question (making a family, for example, and so forth) *that* it is that he must have in hand. But, *before* he has taken possession, and till he has taken possession, it is not necessary, how desirable soever on some accounts it might be, that at the public expense he should have any thing. So as you do but give him in prospect, and sufficiently secured, as much as, if in possession, would be, by ever so little, more than any man ever got into possession of by means of trade or manufactures—a million for example—that same million will, when the time comes, be accepted of, upon account at least, as and for the money necessary to make his family. Of this same million, the eventual *possession* being sufficiently secured, the bare expectation will suffice to buy him off from all trades and manufactures in the lump: so that in fact, if when measured according to the standard laid down by this *fifth* plea, the allowance made on the sum mentioned in plea the *fourth* be sufficiently liberal, the advantage mentioned in this same *fifth* plea, is so much got for nothing.

Money, it must all this while be carefully kept in mind—*money* is the only sort of matter, which, according to the principles of our Right Honorable Author, is to the purpose here in question; viz. to the purpose of providing recruits for the official establishment, capable of officiating in the character of matter of *reward*. Even so substantial a thing as *power*—power of *management*—power of *patronage*,—*titles*,—*honors*, not to speak of any such empty bubble as *reputation*—all this, in the estimation of the Right Honorable Author, is, to the purpose here in question at least, without force or value.

Money, therefore, and in the same quantity as if there were nothing else that had any value, is the matter of which the *reward*, or whatever it be that is to constitute a man's inducement to engage in the service of the country, is to be composed.

But, as is very truly observed by the Right Honorable Gentleman, so it is, that in virtue of the money, the prospect of which

they present to those who engage in them, there are not only "other honorable and lucrative professions," but "various branches of trade and manufactures," that enter into "competition" with the money, which, in the character of official emolument, stands annexed to official service.

Equally true it is, that every instance, in which, in case of a man's "engaging in any of those non-official lines of industry, and in particular in any branch of trade or manufacture, it might happen to him to get more money than he could by official service, the difference, whatever it may be, has" (to use the words of the Right Honorable Gentleman) "*a tendency at least to exclude from the service of their country men likely to be useful to it.*" True, on the other hand, it is, that the character in which this "tendency" operates, is not that of a *physical bar:* no, nor so much as that of a *penal statute.* It is, however, in the character of that sort of obstacle, the resisting force of which is, in his eyes, so powerful that the whole paragraph, with the whole of the de-obstruent force therein contained, is devoted to the sole purpose of removing it; viz. by persuading those on whom it depends, so to order matters, that by this "discharge of trusts and duties" more money may so be got by some body or any body, than can be got by any body in the exercise of any "lucrative profession, trade, or manufacture."

Now, then, to get the better of so troublesome a thing as this "*principle* of *exclusion,*" and enable the "*service of the country,*" to have as good a chance as "*trade and manufactures*" have, for "*engaging men likely to be useful to it,*" what is then to be done? two courses there are, and in the nature of things but two, by which any such effect is capable of being produced. One consists in lessening the quantity of money capable of being gained in the way of trade and manufactures; the other, in increasing the quantity of money capable of being gained in the shape of official emolument in the way of official service.

To the quantity of money capable at present of being gained in trade or manufactures there are no limits. A million or more one hears spoken of as the amount of the money gained in this or that instance, and even from no very considerable beginnings: of half that money or thereabouts one hears of in numbers of other instances. Fixations of this sort must remain exposed, not only to original uncertainty, but to continual variation. By a select committee, with the Right Honorable Gentleman at the head, this point, however, is one that needs not despair of being settled: settled, if not with mathematical exactness, at any rate with that rough degree of precision which is sufficient for practice.

True it is, all this while, that on behalf of the public—that public which he has thus taken under his protection—the sum which the Right Honorable Gentleman requires for this purpose is

but a "*limited*" sum. To enable the public to maintain, on the occasion in question, the proposed "*competition*" with so formidable a host of competitors as the "*other honorable and lucrative professions, and various branches of trade and manufactures,*" all he asks is—that it "should be in a situation to bid to a *limited* extent."

But, the *limits* here alluded to—at what point shall they be set? If set at a sum, the effect of which will leave to these rival pursuits so much as a "*tendency* to exclude from the service of their country men who are likely to be useful to it," they will "*exclude*," from the faculty of regulating practice on this head, the Right Honorable Gentleman, with those "wise" principles of his which he is thus supporting against the *unwise* ones he complains of.

For a *maximum*, beginning with the highest situation, shall we, to make sure, say, for example, a couple of millions, to be laid up over and above "*his necessary current expenses*," by an official person who with that "industry, zeal, and fidelity," the union of which the Right Honorable Accountant gives him credit for, as a matter of course, shall, in that highest situation, have spent in the "*discharge of trusts and public duties a great part*"—say for example five and twenty years—of his life.

For our *maximum* taking, then, these two millions, or even so scanty an allowance as a single million, and setting out from this point, shall we proceed downwards till, after the manner of that other *state lottery*, which is commonly so called, we have got for our lottery a number of prizes equal to the aggregate number of official situations?

This is what, "*on reflection*," the "*wisdom*" of the Right Honorable Gentleman requires us to do, on pain of seeing "*established*, the principle," against the "exclusive tendency" of which we have been seeing him remonstrate so pathetically: this, in short, is what we *must* do, unless, embracing the only other branch of the alternative, and going to work in the other quarter, we set ourselves to restrict the quantity of money that a man shall be "*in a situation*" to gain by any of the "*various branches of trade and manufactures.*"

In the "*bidding*," thus proposed by him, "*for talents*," if on his plan the public service is to have any chance of bearing off the prize or prizes, there remains therefore but one other expedient; and that is, the "*limiting*," and thus eventually lessening, the quantity of the emolument which men shall have it in their power to make in trade or manufactures.

But this is what the Right Honorable Gentleman would never permit himself to endeavour at. For this would be to "*mark with* disrespect the character"—not now indeed "of the official man,"

but what in the Right Honorable Gentleman's estimation would be quite as improper a character thus to mark, viz. that of the *mercantile* man. It would be to stigmatize by this invidious mark "great numbers of those who engage in trade and manufactures:"—persons "than whom none," not even the official man himself, "are by the author" (as the Right Honorable Author is himself pleased to assure them) "held *in higher estimation.*" This, then, is the objection to the setting limits to the sum, which a man shall be "in a situation to gain by trade or manufactures:" and after an objection thus conclusive it were lost time to look for minor ones.

§. VII. *Digression concerning the Value of Money.*

Such, as we have seen, is the course one or other branch of which is, "on reflection," in the sight of the Right Honorable Author, so necessary, that the omitting to pursue it is considered by him as that which would have the effect of "*marking the character of the official man with disrespect;*" which to do would, as, in the way of interrogation, the Right Honorable Gentleman, with most incontestable propriety, observes, would be to act without "*fairness, justice, or reason.*"

Now as to "*disrespect*" for this *protégé* of the Right Honorable Gentleman's—disrespect for him I do protest that I feel none. But, as to the allowing to him out of the taxes all that money which the "*generosity*" and "*justice*" and "*reason*" and "*policy*" and "*wisdom*" and "*fairness*" of his Right Honorable Patron lays claim to on his behalf—without knowing exactly what it is, thus much I know, that so expensive a proof of the absence of disrespect is more than I could afford to pay my share of: mine being one of the "many instances in which *income,*" even though not "*official,*" is insufficient (to borrow the Right Honorable Gentleman's words) "actually insufficient for *these.*"

What I am therefore reduced to, is—the plea that my declining to do *that,* to the doing of which my limited means are so far from being sufficient, is not a mark of *disrespect* to any body: and by this plea, in so far and so long as it can be maintained, as I humbly conceive it may be to the very last, without disrespect to the Right Honorable Gentleman, I am determined to abide.

My notion of him (I mean the "official man") is—that, besides *money,* there are other things that are capable of being objects of his regard: other things that are capable of engaging him to take upon himself the obligations of office, in the words of the Right Honorable Author, (of the value of which, when they are to be had, I am too fully sensible to take up with any other) to "spend" even

"a great part of his life in the discharge of trusts and public duties:" and in proof of this, regarding *fact* as no bad proof of possibility, I have referred to several most conspicuous, and happily very extensive, lines of practice.[1]

If it be by either of us,—if it be by any body,—that this same "official man" is treated with "disrespect," I would venture to appeal to every man, in whose eyes there may be any thing besides *money* that has a value, whether it is not, by the Right Honorable Gentleman himself, whose sympathy can so ill brook the imputation, and whose imagination paints to him a set of unreasonable people; a set of people, into whose company, spite of all protestations, I cannot but expect to find myself forced;—people who, being sworn enemies to this same officially "industrious, zealous, and faithful" person, exercise themselves in "marking his character with disrespect," in despite of "fairness, reason, and justice." (p. 65.)

What the Right Honorable Gentleman *insists* upon—and in a manner much stronger than by *direct assertion*—what he insists upon in the way of *assumption*, is—that upon the mind of his official person there is nothing in the world but money that is capable of operating, whether in possession or expectation, with any adequate degree of efficiency, in the character of "*reward*."

Now, in regard to this same sort of person, my notion is quite opposite:—quite opposite, and so determinately so, that the supposed contrariety of his disposition to the character given of him by the Right Honorable Gentleman, is all that that plan of mine, which has so often been alluded to, has to ground itself upon.

Money, money—nothing else, Sir, is of any value in your eyes. . . .

Many things there are, Sir, besides money, that have their value in your eyes. . . .

The first is the language in which this respectable person is addressed by the Right Honorable Gentleman, his declared patron. The other is the language in which he is addressed by the *obscure* man, his supposed enemy.

In which of these two modes of address is there most of *respect*, most of "*disrespect?*"—Gentle reader, judge between us.

For my part, the former mode of address is one that I could not prevail upon myself to use to any man: no, not even to the Right Honorable Gentleman himself: not even his own licence, clear as it is,—not even his own express command would prevail upon me; neither *to* him, nor *of* him, could I prevail upon myself ever to say any such thing: for I do not, no, *that* I don't,—I would say it to his face—believe it to be true. I beg pardon for the seeming contradiction that I put upon what he says: I mean not any thing of

[1] Part I.

disrespect to him in this shape, any more than in the other. I mean not that, should he absolutely insist upon giving any such account of himself, he would, *at the moment*, be saying *that* of which he would be conscious of its not being true. All I mean is—that if such be his opinion of himself, he does not do himself justice: that, for want of leisure, engrossed as his attention has been by the "discharge of trusts and public duties," he has not looked closely enough into a subject—a human subject—which, if he were to become a little better acquainted with it, than he appears as yet to be, might afford him more cause of satisfaction than he seems to be aware of.

Yes, on this ground, defend him I will, though it be against himself; and, fierce as his attack upon himself is, it is not pushed with so much skill, but that I will make him parry it.

For this purpose, I do insist upon it—I will take no denial—that he shall look once more at the last of his own pages but one. After reading, marking, and learning them, that "the most degrading corruption of a statesman, or his friends, is indeed by the influence of money," he will find it written—and that immediately after—that "public men may be corrupted by *the love of power*, as well as by lust of gain."—Now, then, if by this same love of power men may be "*corrupted*," by this same love of power (I say) they may be *operated upon*; and if operated upon to a *bad* purpose, so may they, and (let us hope) still more easily and effectively, to a *good* one: for when operated upon to a bad purpose, they must be strange men indeed if they do not find themselves operated upon, with how little force and effect soever, by some principle or other, in a *counter direction*: in a counter direction by some principle or other, call it *fear of disrepute*, call it *conscience*, call it what you please[1]—which they would find acting, not in *opposition* to, but in *concert* with, the love of power, in any case, in which the purpose, towards which it operated upon them, and towards which it tended to direct their exertions, were a *good* one.

And is it really any opinion of the Right Honorable Gentleman's, that to the love of power it is impossible to act upon the mind of man in any direction but a *sinister* one? impossible to act upon it with effect in any other way than by corrupting it?—No: *that* it is not: for if it were, he would shake off from his hands whatsoever, in the shape of power, he felt sticking on them; he would shake it off as he would a viper. Adieu all Treasureships! adieu even all *Clerkships!* for to the *Clerkship*, even of *Parliament*, though no such troublesome appendage as that of *obligation* has ever been felt cleaving to it and incumbering it, yet (not to

[1] In the *Table of the Springs of Action*, lately published by the author, all the principles in question may be found, with Explanations.

speak of *money*,—*that* not being here in question) *power* enough, and in a variety of shapes, might be found thereunto appertaining, if a gentleman happened to be in a humor to make use of it.

Thus it is that in and by every line, I am laboring and toiling to prove, and if possible persuade gentlemen to be of opinion, that the sun shines at noon-day. But why? Only because in and by the argument of the Right Honorable Gentleman the contrary fact is assumed.

§. VIII. *Plea* 6. *Need of Money as a Stimulus to Official Exertion.*

A sixth plea, if I understand it right, consists in the alledged need of money for the purpose of serving in the case of official men in the character of a stimulus: to be applied, viz. to men of hereditary wealth and independence, to spur them on to the acquisition of talent, or else to be applied somewhere else, in order to enable us to do without them and their talents, by having better men in their stead.

Of this plea the account I am thus giving, is, I must confess, besides its not being quite so clear as I could wish, a little long-winded; but it is the best I am able to give. Meantime the reader will see whether he can make any thing better of it.

"It has always been justly held"[1] (says the Right Honorable Gentleman) "in a free country, and particularly in this, to be one of its greatest privileges, that the chief aristocracy, as far as relates to the management of its public concerns, *should be* an aristocracy of *talent* and of *virtue*, as well as of *rank* and of *property*; which principle would be *destroyed*, *if remuneration for public services should be withheld*; and the community would be deprived of all its advantages. Not only the great offices of state, but some others of most efficiency" (Secretaryships to the Treasury, perhaps, for instance) "*must then* be" (meaning probably, *would in that case necessarily be*) "confined to men of hereditary wealth and independence; and, with all the *proper* respect which *should be* entertained for such men, it must be allowed that, for the acquisition and improvement of talents necessary for the higher offices, the passing occasionally through the inferior situations, and that *principle of activity* which animates men in the attainment, so much more than in the mere possession, of power and station, are much more favorable than the *honors* claimable by descent alone."

The exertions made by the Right Honorable Gentleman, in the endeavours he uses to prevail upon himself, and enable himself, to pay whatever respect it may be "*proper*" to pay to men of a cer-

[1] p. 65.

tain description, present an edifying spectacle. It is what he has been trying at, and laboring at throughout the whole course of his paragraph, (which, as the reader feels, is not a very short one,) and after all without having any great success to boast of. Stationed, and for so long a course of time, close to the very door of the Cabinet, though not yet on the right side of it—seeing the *Duke of Portland* every day, seeing the *Earl of Liverpool*, seing the *Lord Viscount Castlereagh*, son and heir-apparent to the Earl of Londonderry, seeing the *Earl of Westmoreland*, seeing the *Earl of Chatham*, seeing *Earl Camden*, seeing the *Lord Mulgrave*—(seeing in a word almost every body that is worth seeing) all of them not only "men of hereditary wealth and independence," but even nobles of the land—among all those great men there is not one, no not one, whom he has found it possible to "hold in any higher estimation" than great numbers of those who engage in trade and manufactures. I mean antecedently to the exertions betrayed or displayed in this present paragraph; and how small the progress is, which in this same paragraph he has succeeded in making, let this same paragraph itself declare.

His Majesty, for whom also the Right Honorable Gentleman (I will be bound for him) has all along been laboring, and with at least equal energy, to entertain "*all the proper respect which should be entertained for*" him, all these great men, his majesty, or *those whose estate* (as the lawyers say) *he hath*, were, at one time or other, at the pains of decking out with *titles*, and even some of them with *ribbons*: yet after all, and upon so good a judge of merit as the Right Honorable Gentleman—one moreover who has had such good and such near opportunities of observation—so inconsiderable has been the effect that has been produced at all this expense—that "in the estimation" of the Right Honorable Gentleman, they are still so unfortunate, every one of them, as not to occupy any higher place, than is occupied by, alas! alas! "great numbers of those who engage in trade and manufactures." . . . . .

Of the difficulties which he had to struggle with, in his endeavours to find or make any higher place for them, the magnitude is betrayed, (shall we say?) or manifested, in every line: as is likewise, when all is over, the delicacy with which, to the very last, he avoided giving any direct expression to that conclusion, which, having, in an unlucky moment, before the commencement of this paragraph, burst out unawares, had, throughout the whole course of it, been laboring once more to find vent and utterance. Of all these great men, if we may take the word of so good a judge, there is nothing to be made without money; nor, if it were "proper" to speak out, any great matter even with the help of it: especially in comparison of some other great men that he knows of, who, "*for the acquisition and improvement of talents*" necessary for the

higher offices—including a consummate skill in the application of the four rules of arithmetic, and without wasting time upon any such speculative and theoretical science as logic, have had the benefit of "passing *occasionally*" (*pour passer le tems*, as the French say—) "through the inferior situations."

When the antagonists whom the Right Honorable Gentleman has to contend with, are the offspring of his own genius, they give him little trouble.

In his 62d page we find him setting to rights a set of men (but whether these were "among his reasonable and candid men" that he had just been meeting with, I cannot take upon me to be certain) a set of men, however, of some sort or other, according to whose conception, the *whole* amount of what is levied on the people by taxes, goes to pay "sinecures and pensions;" from which, if true, it would follow that, on so simple a condition, as that of suppressing these nuisances—taxes, those still greater nuisances, might be cleared away at any time. But that any such conception is a misconception, "and consequently, although there were no sinecures or pensions, there would still be taxes," he proves immediately beyond all dispute: and his antagonists, let them be ever so "*reasonable*," have not a word more to say for themselves.

This misconception being set to rights in that his 62d page, here again in this his 66th page, we find him employed in instructing and undeceiving another set of men, or perhaps the same set in another dress, who are for "*withholding remuneration*" (meaning nothing less than *all* remuneration, howsoever ashamed they may be to say so) "for public services."

A strange set of men they are whoever they are—and what is to be done with them? The course he takes with them, (and if he does not convince them, he at least reduces them to silence) is, the setting them to think of a "principle," which he knows of, and which, if such "remunerations were withheld, *would*" (he says) "be destroyed: and the principle once destroyed," "the community" (he concludes with an irresistible force of reasoning) "*would be deprived of all its advantages*."

Now, if so it be that he really knows of any such men, it is pity but he had told us where some of them are to be seen: for as a raree-show they would be worth looking at. I, for my part, jacobin as I suppose I am, I, for my part, am not one of them. And this too I am happily enabled to prove: having, for a particular purpose, proposed some good round sums to be disposed of in this way; and *that* according to another plan, in my opinion of which, every day I live confirms me.

Of the only sort of thing which in his account,—at least while this paragraph lasts,—is of any value, viz., *money*, my plan (I speak now of that which relates to the present subject) goes somewhat

further than any other which it has happened to me to see, in reducing the quantity to be administered at the public expense: and yet not even in this shape do I propose to withhold it, except in so far as the public service would be performed, not only *cheaper* but *better* without it: and, be the Right Honorable Gentleman's "*principle*" what it may, I disclaim altogether any such destructive thought, as that of "*destroying*" it.

All this while, a difficulty, which has been perplexing me, is—that of comprehending what sort of an aristocracy this new sort is, the discovery of which has been made by the Right Honorable Gentleman, and to which, exercising the right which is acknowledged to belong to all discoverers, he has given the name of "*an aristocracy of talent and of virtue.*" Not that by any such description, if taken by itself, any great difficulty would have been produced, but that it is by the sort of relation, which is represented as subsisting between this sort of aristocracy and the sort of thing called *money*, that my perplexity is occasioned.

So far as money is concerned, "*virtue*," according to what we have been used, most of us, to hear and read of at school, and at college, such of us as have been to college, consists, though not perhaps in doing altogether without money, at any rate in taking care not to set too high a value on it. But, *with* all its virtue, or rather *in virtue* of its very virtue, the aristocracy, which the Right Honorable Gentleman has in view, is a sort of aristocracy, of which the characteristic is, that they will not (the members of it) do a stitch without money: and in their eyes, "remuneration" in any other shape is no remuneration at all: why? because in their eyes, to this purpose at least, nothing whatever but money is of any value.

We have seen who they are that must have been sitting for the Right Honorable Gentleman's Kit-Cat Club—his "*aristocracy of rank and of property:*" where now shall we find the originals of his "aristocracy of talent and of virtue?"

Consulting the works of *Dr. Beatson* and *Mr. Luffman*, the only channels, the periodical ones excepted, through which, in my humble situation, a man can form any conception concerning any such "*great characters*," I can find no others but *Mr. Perceval*, *Lord Eldon*, *Mr. Canning*, *Sir David Dundas*, and a Gentleman (Right Honorable, I presume) who, in Mr. Luffman's Table of Great Characters, occupies at present his 15th column, by the description of "*Mr. G. Rose.*"

Meantime *money*,—meaning *public* money,—being in the Right Honorable Gentleman's system of ætiology, the *causa sine quâ non*, not only of "*virtue*," but of that "*talent*" which is found in company with virtue, and being on that score necessary to the constitution of that *one* of the *two* branches of his aristocracy, if it

has two, or of the *whole* of it if it is all in *one*,—what I would submit to him is—whether the task which in entering upon this work, he appears to have set himself, will have been perfectly gone through with, till he has found means for securing to this *talent-and-virtue* branch of his "*aristocracy*," a larger portion of his one thing needful than appears to have as yet fallen to its lot.

Running over, in this view, such parcels of the matter of remuneration as exceed each of them the amount of 10,000*l.* a-year, (the only part of the *sinecure list* a man can find time for looking over and speaking to in this view), I find them all, or almost all of them, in possession of the "*rank-and-property*" branch: while the "*talent-and-virtue*" branch, starved and hide-bound, has found itself reduced to take up with the other's leavings.

§. IX. *Plea* 7. *Need of Money for the Support of Official Dignity.*

A seventh plea, and the last I have been able to find, consists in the alleged need of money for a purpose that seems to be the same with one, which in other vocabularies is meant by the words "*support of dignity*:"[1] in the words of the Right Honorable Gentleman (for, on pain of misrepresentation, the very words must be taken where words are every thing) "*preservation of a certain appearance.*"

"It is true" (continues he) "that magnanimity and genuine patriotic ambition will look for a nobler reward for their services than the emoluments of office; but, in the present state of society, *a certain appearance* is essential to be *preserved* by persons in *certain stations*, which cannot be maintained without a liberal provision."

From this paragraph, one piece of good news we learn, or should learn at least, if it could be depended upon, is—that the time is now come, when "*magnanimity and genuine patriotic ambition will look for a nobler reward for their services than the emoluments of office.*" So late as the moment when the last hand was put to the Right Honorable Author's last preceding paragraph, this moment of magnanimity was not yet arrived: down to that moment, had "*remuneration*" (meaning as afterwards explained, in the shape of *emolument*) been withheld, "*principle*," of some kind or other, would have been destroyed[1]—and so forth.

Fortunate is this change for the country, and in particular, not a little so for the somewhat deficient plan here, by an unofficial hand, ventured to be proposed.[2] Here then we have it;—and from such

[1] Finance Committee, 1797-8; do. 1807-8.

[2] The plan here, as elsewhere alluded to, is the plan, the publication of which was suspended as above.

high and competent authority,—that besides emolument, there is a something, which, in the character of "*reward for their services,*" "*magnanimity and genuine patriotic ambition*" "*will look for*": and (what is better still) this unspecified something is capable of being received not only in the character of a *reward*, but in the character of a reward of "*a nobler*" sort than emolument—that *sine quâ non*, without which, till this paragraph of the Right Honorable Gentleman's was concluded, or at least begun upon, nothing was to be done.

Having this, I have all I want, and (as will be seen, and as I hope has even been seen already) even more than I mean, or have any need, to use.

Unfortunately for me, no sooner has the Right Honorable Gentleman's wisdom and candor and discernment obtained from him, and for my use, this concession,—than some others of his virtues, I know not exactly which, join hands and take it back again: and, though no otherwise than by *implication*, yet,—so necessary to his argument is this implication,—that, if he had taken it back in *direct* words, he could not have done more than he has done, if so much, towards depriving me of the benefit of it.

"But," (continues he, and now comes the retractation) "a *certain* appearance is essential to be preserved by persons in *certain* stations, which," (meaning probably "*which*" *appearance*) "cannot be maintained without a liberal provision."

"In *certain* stations, a certain appearance"—Nothing can be more delicate,—nothing at the same time more commodiously *uncertain*,—than this double *certainty*. Meantime, if, in the meaning of the whole paragraph there be any thing certain, it appears to me to be this: viz. that on behalf of "*the magnanimity and genuine patriotic ambition*" which the Right Honorable Gentleman has taken under his protection, what he claims is—that, in the account *debtor and creditor*, as between service and reward, this reward which, not being emolument, is *nobler* than emolument, (meaning by *nobler*, if any thing at all be meant by it, that which, in *their* estimate at least, is *worth more*) is to be set down as *worth nothing*: and accordingly, that the quantity of the matter of reward, which each official person is to have in *the less noble*, but *more substantial* and tangible shape, is to be exactly the same as if there were no other reward, either in their hand, or within their view.

To my plan however, with its weak means of support, so necessary is the concession thus plainly, though but for the moment, made by the Right Honorable Gentleman, that with my good will, he shall never have it back again. *Power* then has its value: *reputation* has its value: and this, for the moment at least, has been admitted by Mr. Rose. By Mr. Rose's evidence—by the

weight of Mr. Rose's authority—I have proved it. And now is my time for triumphing. For though neither he, nor any other Right Honorable Gentleman, ever took his seat in any moderately full *House of Commons*, nor ever attended a *Quarter Sessions*, without seeing before him gentlemen in numbers, whose conduct afforded a still more conclusive evidence of the same fact, than any verbal testimony they could have given, even though it were in black and white,—(*magistrates*, by the labour they bestow without emolument in the execution of their office,—*members*, by the expense which, lawfully or unlawfully, they have been at in obtaining their *unemolumented* seats,)—yet such is the weight of *his* authority, and to my humble plan, so strong the support it gives, that, having seized the fortunate moment, and got possession of the evidence, I can do no less than make the most of it.

Now then, (say I) whatever it be that these valuable things are worth, so much, in the account as between *reward* and *service*, let them be set down for: nor shall even the ingenuity of the Right Honorable Gentleman enable him to object any want of "*fairness*" to my estimate, leaving, as my plan does, to his *protégé* (the proposed official person himself) to make out his own estimate:—to fix his own value upon the *non-emolumentary* part of his reward. The more he chooses to have in the *more* "*noble*" shape, the less may he be content to receive in the *less* noble shape: how much he will have of each rests altogether with himself: and, so long as,—with its *bitters* in one hand, and its *sweets* in the other,—the office cannot upon my plan be put into his hands without his own consent, what ground for complaint any body can make for him, is more than I can see.

"*Certain appearance?*" For what *purpose* is it that this *certain appearance*, whatever it be, is so "essential to be preserved?"—Is it for *commanding respect?*

In *common* arithmetic—in, the sort of arithmetic that would be employed in a plain man's reasoning, be the article what it may—respect or any thing else—if there be divers sources or efficient causes of it,—*money*, for instance, and *power* and *reputation*,—to command the necessary or desirable quantity, whatever be that quantity, the more you have from any one source, the less you need to have from the others, or from any other.

"In the present state of society," (for it is to *that* that the Right Honorable Gentleman calls for our attention) unfortunately for us vulgar, this arithmetic,—this vulgar arithmetic,—is not the arithmetic of "*high situation*:" it is not the arithmetic of *St. James's*: it is not the arithmetic of the *House of Lords*: it is not the arithmetic of the *House of Commons*: it is not the arithmetic of the *Treasury*: it is not the arithmetic of *Office*,—of any office in which a more *convenient* species of arithmetic can be employed

instead of it. In particular, it is not, (so we learn, not only from this paragraph, but from the whole tenor of the work of which it makes a part) the arithmetic of the *Navy Treasurer's Office.* According to this *higher* species of arithmetic, the more you have been able to draw from *any one* of these same sources, the more you stand in need of drawing from *every* other. *Power,* not *indigence,* is the measure of demand.

Have you so many hundred thousands of pounds in money? having this money you have *power.* Having this *money* with this *power,* it is "*essential*" you should have *dignity.* Having this dignity; you have that which requires money—more money—for the "*support*" of it. *Money, Power, Dignity; Money, Power, Dignity*—such, in this higher species of arithmetic, is the everlasting circulate.

Are you in a "*certain station?*"—Whatsoever you have *power* to spend, and at the same time *inclination* to spend, this is what the Right Honorable Treasurer is ready to assure you, it is "*indispensably necessary*" you should spend. This is what, if your patience will carry you to the next section of this humble comment, or to the next page of the Right Honorable text, you will see stated by the Right Honorable "*discharger of trusts and public duties,*"—and in terms, of which, on any such score as that of want of distinctness or positiveness, no just complaint can be made.

§ X. *Plea* 8. *Concerning the late Mr. Pitt's Expenditure:—the Impropriety of Economy how far proved by it.*

Immediately upon the back, and as it should seem for the more effectual ascertainment of this so unfortunately uncertain, though double certainty, comes the grand example already above referred to: that one example,—in which we are to look for whatsoever explanation is to be found, for whatever is not inexplicable, in the Right Honorable Author's theory. And this example proves to be the rate, and quantum, and mode of expenditure, (private expenditure), observed and here stated by the Right Honorable Gentleman in the instance of the late Mr. Pitt.

"That great statesman" (says he) "who was,[1] 'poor amidst a nation's wealth,' whose ambition was patriotism, whose expense and whose economy were only for the public, died in honorable poverty. That circumstance" (continues he) "certainly conveys no reproach upon his memory; but when he had leisure to attend to his private concerns, it *distressed* him seriously to reflect that he had debts, without the means of paying them, which he could

[1] p. 67.

not have avoided incurring, except from a *parsimony* which would have been called meanness, or by accepting a remuneration from the public, which his enemies would have called rapacity; for he had no expense of any sort that was not *indispensably necessary*, except in *improvements* in his country residence, where his house was hardly equal to the accommodation of the most private gentleman."

That the logic of our Right Honorable Author is not altogether so consummate as his arithmetic, is a suspicion that has been already hazarded: and here perhaps may be seen a confirmation of it.

The proposition undertaken by him to be proved was a pretty comprehensive one: its extent not being less than the entire field of office, considered in respect of the several masses of official emolument comprized in it. This it was that he took for his *subject*: adding for his *predicate*, that these incomes were and are not one of them sufficient,—not one of them, *all things considered*, sufficient to all purposes.[1]

For proof of this his *universal* proposition, in so far as it is in the nature of *example* to afford proof, he gives us one example: *one* example and but one. The one office, in the instance of which, if insufficiency of emolument be proved, such insufficiency is to be accepted as proof, and that *conclusive*, of equal or proportionable insufficiency in the case of all the rest, is the office of *Prime Minister*: an office, the emolument of which is composed of the emolument attached to *two* offices, which, when the parliamentary seat of the official person is in the House of Commons, have commonly been, and in the instance of the said Mr. Pitt were, holden in *one* hand.

To complete the Right Honorable Author's argument, there remains for proof but one other proposition, and *that* is—the insufficiency of this compound mass of emolument in the instance of the said Mr. Pitt: and the medium of proof is composed of this fact; viz. that, being so in possession of this mass of annual emolument, he the said Mr. Pitt spent all this money of his own, together with no inconsiderable mass, amount not mentioned, of other people's money besides.

Assuming, what nobody will dispute, that Mr. Pitt died in "*poverty*," that which by his Right Honorable Friend is observed and predicated of this poverty, is that it was "*honorable*" to him: which being admitted or not admitted, the Right Honorable

[1] "If we look to official incomes, it will be found they are, in most cases, barely equal to the moderate, and even the necessary expences of the parties: in many instances they are actually insufficient for *these*. May we not then venture to ask, whether it is reasonable, or whether it would be politic, that such persons should, after spending a great part of their lives with industry, zeal, and fidelity, in the discharge of trusts and public duties, be left afterwards without reward of any sort, and their families entirely without provision?"—p. 64.

Gentleman's further observation, that it "certainly conveys no reproach to his memory," shall, if it be of any use to him, be admitted or not admitted likewise.

Had this been all, there would certainly at least have been no *dishonor* in the case: a man who has no family, nor any other person or persons, having on the score of any special relation, any claim upon his bounty, whether it be his choice to expend the whole of his income, or whether it be his choice to lay up this or that part of it, nobody surely can present any just ground for complaint.

But, in addition to that which was his own to spend or save, Mr. Pitt having spent money of other people's in round numbers to the amount of 40,000*l.* more: and this mode of expenditure having in so unhappy a way been rendered notorious, rich and poor together having been forced to contribute to make up to this division of the rich the loss they had been content to run the risk of, something was deemed adviseable to be said of it.

In strictness of argument, some readers there may be perhaps, in whose view of the matter it might be sufficient here to observe—that, admitting the fact, unhappily but too notorious, of Mr. Pitt's spending other people's money—admitting this fact in the character of a proof, and that a conclusive one, that the mass of emolument attached to the two offices he filled was not sufficient for the *one* official person by whom those two offices were filled, the proof would not extend beyond that one pair of offices; and, the number of offices being unhappily to be counted by thousands, perhaps even by tens of thousands, and this highest of offices, in point of *power*, differing more widely from the general run of offices than perhaps any other that could have been found, the proposition has much the air of remaining in rather worse plight, than if nothing in the character of proof had been subjoined to it.

On this footing might the matter perhaps be found to stand, if viewed in a point of view purely and duly logical. But, forasmuch as, notwithstanding, or rather by reason of, its profuseness, the expenditure of this one official person is by his Right Honorable Friend held out as an example; not merely as an example for illustration, but as a pattern for imitation;—for imitation by official persons in general;—for imitation in respect of the quantum of emolument necessary to be allotted out of the taxes, and attached to their respective offices, an observation or two shall here be hazarded, respecting the conclusiveness of the Right Honorable Author's argument with reference to this collateral and practical part of it.

The *wry neck* of the hero having in this way rendered itself too conspicuous to be concealed by any artifice, what was left to the panegyrist was to make a *beauty* of it. The expense of this repair

has surely not been inconsiderable: for here it is not logic only, but morality and policy that have been made to share in it. Our assent being secured for so unexceptionable a proposition, as that, in the circumstance in question, *poverty is honorable*, the next contrivance is to slip in and get the benefit of our assent extended to one other proposition, viz. (as if there were no difference) that *spending other people's money was honorable*: and thus it is that our approbation is to be engaged for the practice and policy of giving encouragement to such *honorable* conduct, by tokens of parliamentary approbation bestowed at the public expense.

"*Necessary*," with its conjugate "*necessity*," and its near of kin "*essential*," are words of no small convenience to the Right Honorable Gentleman: of such convenience that *that* thing (it should seem) could not be very easy to be found, which the same being convenient to official persons in official situations, is not, by and in virtue of such convenience, under and by virtue of the Right Honorable Author's system of ontology, rendered "*necessary*."

Even to a man, who had not quite so much as 8,000*l.* a year of his own to spend,[1] a mode of expenditure, which, in whatsoever degree *convenient*, would (one should have thought), have presented the least satisfactory claim to the appellation of *necessary*, is that which consists in spending money of other people's.

Two rocks the reputation of the hero found his course threatened by: two rocks, *meanness* and *rapacity*, one on each side: and the expenditure of other people's money—this was the harbour in which, to avoid this *Scylla* and this *Charybdis*, he took refuge.

Had the expenditure of the hero been confined to the sum which by the competent authorities had been deemed sufficient, such limitation would, from the justice of the Right Honorable Panegyrist himself, notwithstanding his "*just partiality*," have received a gentle reprimand couched under the term "*parsimony*;" and his imagination has found somebody else to call it *meanness*; had he for those *extraordinary* services which we hear so much of, "*accepted*" as "a remuneration from the public," any of those *sinecures*, which, in such unhappy abundance, he saw lavished on men who could not produce so much as the pretence of even the most *ordi-*

[1] As first Commissioner of the Treasury, including additional salary . . . . . 5,032*l.* 11*s.* 0*d.*
As Chancellor of the Exchequer 1,897 15 1
Net receipt together 6,930 6 1

15th Report from the select Committee on Finance, 1797, Appendix C. page 20. Add house rent, coals, and candles.

nary service; the same industrious and fruitful imagination has found him friends, in the character of "enemies," to "*call it rapacity*:"—to avoid this charge of meanness it is, that he places himself in a state of dependence under traders of various description,—the butcher, the baker, the fishmonger, not to speak of the political intriguer:—to avoid the charge of rapacity it is, that what he obtains from those people, he obtains from them on the pretence of meaning to pay them, knowing that he has not wherewithal, and, nobly, constantly, and heroically, determined never to "accept" it.

As to distress—while the distress confined itself to those plebeian breasts, this Right Honorable breast knew no such inmate: but when "some debts pressed so severely upon him as to render it necessary for some of his most private and intimate friends to step in and save him from immediate inconvenience," when, in plain English, he had or was afraid of having executions in his house, then it was that the distress became contagious—then it was that "it distressed him seriously to reflect that he had debts."

When, of a *necessity*, or of any thing else, the existence is asserted by a Gentleman, and as of his own knowledge, and that so Right Honorable a Gentleman,—an obscure person,—who, having no such honor, nor any chance of producing persuasion, by any other means than such as his own weak reason may be able to supply,—has after, and notwithstanding all this form of assertion, the misfortune to feel himself still unsatisfied, it is natural to him to look around him for whatever support may any where be to be found:—Parliament—the opinion of parliament—should it be found on his side, will *that* stand him in any stead?

Such as we have seen is the opinion of Mr. Rose. But parliament—on this same point, what is it that has been the opinion of parliament? Why the opinion of parliament is—that, what Mr. Pitt *had* was sufficient: that more than he had was *not* necessary;—was not of that "*indispensable necessity*," which has been brought on the carpet, by the zeal, assisted by the imagination, of Mr. Rose.

Unfortunately for the Right Honorable Panegyrist—unfortunately for his opinions—unfortunately for his assertions—this point, this very point—did, and on the very occasion he speaks of—come under the cognizance and consideration of parliament. The emolument which is found annext to these two offices, both of which had been held at the same time by Mr. Pitt,—this emolument, had it been deemed insufficient for the "official man" in question—viz. for the *species* of official man,—would thereupon of course have received an augmentation:—in the instance of this official person, the subject would have received those marks of

attention, which have so frequently been asked for, and so constantly been given for asking for, in the case of the judges.

Was it that by the case of this distinguished individual, any demand was presented, for any greater mass of emolument than there was likely to be an equally cogent demand for, in the case of any successor of his in the same situation? It seems not easy to conceive a case, in which, all things considered, that demand can ever be so small. True it is, his private fortune was, his station in life considered, barely sufficient for independence. But, he had no wife—no child:—he was in *deed*, as well as in *law*, completely single: and, in the Right Honorable Gentleman's own arithmetic,—which, on this head, differs not much, it must be confessed, from the vulgar arithmetic,—the demand for money, on the part of the father of a family, is as the number of persons it is composed of.

Over and above his 8,000*l.* a year, augmented during half his political life, by his sinecure, to 12,000*l.* what is it that he could want money for?—more money (for *that* is *here* the question) than would be wanted by or for any of his successors in power and office? Was it to buy respect and reputation with?—Deserved and undeserved together, no man in his place, unless it was his father, ever possessed a larger share of those valuable commodities, than this second *William Pitt*. Had he been, in the case of the good-humoured old driveller, who gave so much trouble to Pitt the first, and whom his Majesty's grandfather was so loath to part with or suffer to be elbowed,—in that case there would have been on his part a great deficiency in those essential articles; and if, like *seats*, they had been an object of purchase, and public money the proper sort of money to be employed in the purchase, no small quantity of such money would, in that case, have been necessary.

In the way of experiment—in the endeavor to make this purchase, money, though the man's own, and not public money, was in the Duke's case actually employed, and in memorable and still-remembered abundance: but how completely the experiment failed is at least as well remembered.

To return to the deficiency of the sort in question, supposed to have been, on the more recent occasion, displayed in the same place: this deficiency then,—such as it was and still is—Parliament, in the case of Mr. Pitt, did not, so long as he lived, think fit to supply:—at any rate left unsupplied. What was done was—the giving a mass of public money—to the amount of 40,000*l.* or thereabouts—among a set of people, names undisclosed, but said to be the deceased minister's *creditors*. Friends remembered their friendships: enemies, now that the enemy was no longer in their way, forgot their enmity: friends and enemies vied in sentimentality—vied in generosity—always at the public expense: and

a justification, yea and more than a justification, was thus made, for the cases of the still *future-contingent* widow of Lord Grenville, and the then *paulo-post* FUTURE widow of Mr. Fox.

Should it here be asked why those trustees of the people chose to saddle their principals with the payment of debts, for which they were not engaged, and the necessity of which they themselves could not take upon themselves to pronounce,—my answer is—that if any thing in the shape of an *efficient*, *final*, or *historical* cause will satisfy them, plenty may be seen already:—but if by the word *why* any thing like a *justificative* cause—a *rational* cause—a good and sufficient *reason*—be meant to be asked for, I for my part know of none. At the same time, for the support of the proposition that stands on my side of the argument—it being the negative—viz. that for no such purpose as that of encouraging and inducing ministers to apply to their own use the money of individuals, can it ever be necessary, that money raised by taxes should be employed—for the support of any proposition to this effect—so plain does the proposition seem to me, that neither can I see any demand for a support to it in the shape of a *reason*, nor in truth should I know very well how to go about to find one. Not thus clear of all demand for support is the side taken by the Right Honorable Gentleman. By his vote and influence whatsoever on that occasion was done,—having been supported and encouraged,—on him, in point of consistency, the obligation is incumbent:—He stands *concluded*, as the lawyers say, in both ways: on the one hand, not having ventured to propose any correspondent addition, or any addition at all, to be made to the mass of emolument openly and constantly attached to the office, he is *estopped* from saying that any such extra expenditure was necessary:—on the other hand, having, in the case of the individual by whom that expenditure was made, concurred in the vote and act[1] passed for filling up at the public charge, the gaps made by that same expenditure in the property of other individuals, he stands convicted by his own confession of concurring in charging the public with a burthen, the necessity of which could not be so much as pretended.

On this occasion "may we not venture to ask," whether this may not be in the number of those cases, in which Gentlemen, Honorable Gentlemen, under the guidance of Right Honorable, have, in the words of our Right Honorable Author, been "*misled by mistaken ideas of virtue?*" (p. 77.)

Be this as it may, by this one operation which is so much to the taste of the Right Honorable Gentleman—(not to speak of so many other Right Honorable, Honorable, and even pious

[1] 46 Geo. III. c. 149. sect. 15.

Gentlemen)—two distinguishable lessons may they not be seen given—two distinguishable lessons given to so many different classes of persons, standing in so many different situations?—one of these lessons, to wit, to Ministers; the other to any such person or persons whose situation might enable them to form plans for fulfilling their duty to themselves, by lending money to ministers.

To Ministers an invitation was thus held out, to expend upon themselves, in addition to whatever money is really necessary, as much more as it may happen to them to be disposed so to employ, of that which is not necessary.

Thus far as to the *quantum*:—and as to the *mode*, by borrowing money, or taking up goods of individuals, knowing themselves not to have any adequate means of repayment, and determining not to put themselves into the possession of any such means.

To persons at large, an invitation was at the same time held out to become *intriguers*; and, by seizing or making opportunities of throwing themselves in the way of a Minister, to supply him with money, more than he would be able to repay on demand, and having thus got him in a state of dependence, to obtain from his distress—always at the expense of the public—good gifts in every imaginable shape: *Peerages*—*baronetcies*—*ribbons*—*lucrative offices*—*contracts*, assistance in parliamentary *jobs*,—good things in a word, of all sorts, for which, no money being paid or parted with, neither the giver nor the receiver would run any the slightest risk of being either punished, or in any other way made responsible.

By a *loan*, though, for example, it were but of 5,000*l.* if properly timed—and that on both occasions—first as to the time of the administering the supply, and then as to the time of pressing for repayment, *that* may it not every now and then be done, which could not have been done by a gift of 10,000*l.*? How often have not *seats* for example, been in this way obtained—and this even without any such imputation as that of the sin, the venial sin, of Parliamentary simony?

In virtue of the invitation thus given by the magnanimity and generosity of Parliament,—an invitation open at all times to the acceptance of persons to whom it may happen to find themselves in the corresponding situations—who is there that does not see, how snugly the benefit of bribery may be reaped on both sides, and to any amount, without any of the risk?

A banker is made a Lord—why is a banker to be made a Lord? What is it that the banker ever did, that he is to be made a Lord? A merchant is made a Lord. Why is a merchant to be made a Lord? What is it that the merchant ever did, that he is to be made a Lord?—These are among the questions which are in

themselves as natural, as the answers, true or untrue, might be unpleasant to some and dangerous to others.

We have heard, many of us, of the once celebrated *Nabob of Arcot* and his *creditors*: and the mode in which their respective debts were, to an as yet unfathomed extent, contracted: those debts, which, in so large a proportion, and to so large an amount, just and unjust together, in name the expiring Company, and in effect the whole body of the people, have paid, or, spite of the best possible discrimination, will have to pay.

By the example set, and lesson held out, by the *virtue* of the Right Honorable Gentleman, and his Right Honorable and Honorable coadjutors, the policy of Arcot was it not thus sanctioned and imported into Great Britain? *Ministers, plunge your hands as deep as you can into other people's pockets: intriguers, supply profuse and needy ministers with whatever they want, and make the most of them: we will be your sureties; our care it shall be, that you shall not be losers.*

Against the opinions of so many great characters—such has been my temerity—over and over again have I laboured to prove, I know not with what success, that *money* is not the only coin in which it may happen to a public man to be willing to take payment of the public for his labour: and that *power* and *reputation*,—though they will not like shillings and half-pence, go to market for butter and eggs,—yet, like Exchequer Bills, within a certain circle, they are not altogether insusceptible of a certain degree of currency. Of the truth of this proposition, the Mr. Pitt in question affords at least one instance.

It proves indeed something more: for, in so far as purposely forbearing to receive what it is in a man's option to receive, is tantamount to paying,—it proves that, in the instance in question, the value of these commodities was equal to that of a very considerable sum of money: in round numbers, worth 40,000*l.*—at any rate worth more than 30,000*l.*

Not that in the eyes of the hero, money had no value: for it had much too great a value: it possessed a value greater than the estimated value of common honesty and independence.

He loved money, and by much too well: he loved it with the love of *covetousness*. Not that he hoarded it, or put it out to usury. But there are two sorts of covetous men: those who covet it to keep it, and those who covet it to spend it: the class he belonged to was this *coveting-and-spending* class.

Yes,—*that* he did:—Pitt the second did love money: and not his own money merely, but other people's likewise: loving it, he coveted it; and coveting it, he obtained it.

The debt which he contracted, was so much money coveted, obtained, and expended, for and in the purchase of such miscel-

laneous pleasures as happened to be suited to his taste. The sinecure money which he might have had and would not have, was so much money expended in the shape of *insurance money* on account of power: in the purchase of that *respect* and *reputation*, which his prudence represented as necessary to the preservation of so valuable an article against storms and tempests from above. Sinecure money to any given amount the hero could have got for himself with at least as much facility as for his Right Honorable Panegyrist: but the *respect* and the *reputation* were defences, which in that situation could not be put to hazard. Of the battles he had to fight with the sort of *dragons* commonly called *secret advisers*, this bare hint is all that can be given by one who knows nothing of any body or any thing: his Right Honorable *Achates*, by whom he must (alas! how oft!) have been seen in a tottering and almost sinking attitude,—more particulars could doubtless be given, by a great many, than by a gentleman of his discretion it would ..... (unless it were in a posthumous *diary*, for which posterity would be much obliged to him) be "*useful on his sole authority*" .... *to enter into any detail of*." It was to enable virtue to rise triumphant out of all these trials, that the amount of all this sinecure money was thus *expended*, and without having been *received*.

§ XI. *Concerning Influence.*

On the subject of *Influence* (p. 74) what the Right Honorable Gentleman *admits*, is—that owing to the greatly increased revenue, and all the other augmented and "accumulated business of the state," some increase has, though "unavoidably, been occasioned in it," viz. by "increase of patronage." At the same time, notwithstanding this increase, yet, in point of practice, the state of things, if we may trust to his conception, is as exactly as if there were no such thing at all as influence. How so?—why, for this plain reason, viz. that "the influence created by such means is *infinitely* short of what,"—viz. "by the measures of economy and regulation to which recourse has been had"—"has been given up."

Thus far the Right Honorable Author. But in the humble conception of his obscure commentator, the question between the two quantities, one of which is, in the hands of the Right Honorable Accountant multiplied by one of those figures of rhetoric, which, in aid of the figures of arithmetic are so much at his command—multiplied in a word to "*infinity*"—this question is not, on the present occasion, the proper one. In regard to *influence*, the question which with leave of the public, the obscure commentator would venture to propose—as and for a more proper one, is—whether, for any existing particle of this influence any prepon-

derant use can, in compensation for the acknowledged evil consequences of it, be found? and if not, whether there be any and what quantity of it left remaining, that could be got rid of? understand, on each occasion, as being a condition universally and necessarily implied—without prejudice in other respects,—and *that* preponderant prejudice—to the public service.

As to these points, what appears to me,—with submission, is—that, without travelling out of this the Right Honorable Gentleman's own work; an instance might be found of a little sprig of influence, which, without any such preponderant prejudice to *Mr. Reeve's tree*, might be pruned off.

This work of his, (I mean Mr. Rose's) has for its title "*Observations respecting the Public Expenditure, and the Influence of the Crown.*"

But unfortunately,—as, in due place and time, the candor of the Right Honorable Gentleman himself, in effect, acknowledges, these *observations* of his—and from so experienced an observer—are *all on one side.*

On the subject of expenditure, out of 79 pages, 61 have been expended in showing us what retrenchments have been made, and how great they are. Are they indeed so great? So much the better: but even yet, considering, that if we may believe the Right Honorable Gentleman himself, (p. 62) the whole revenue of Great Britain is "*more than* 60,000,000*l. a year*," let the retrenchments have been ever so great, the demand for further retrenchment, wheresoever it can be made, without preponderant prejudice to the public service, seems by no means to be superseded.

Subject to that necessary condition, is there any such further retrenchment practicable? This is exactly what the Right Honorable Gentleman has not merely avoided—but positively refused to tell us.

From first to last, this work of his, has, according to the author's own account of it, but one aim: and that is, by showing how great the retrenchments are that have been made already, to stop our mouths, and prevent our calling for any more. Is it then true, that in this way all has been done that ought to be done? Even this, not even in terms ever so general, will he vouchsafe to tell us. "To what extent or in what manner, it may be proper to press further retrenchments, the author" (says he, p. 62) "has not the remotest intention of offering an opinion: his view has been clearly explained."

Looking for the explanation the clearness of which is thus insisted on, I find it, if I do not mistake, in his last preceding page but one, viz. in p. 60: in which, speaking of this his work by the name of "the present publication," "In endeavouring to set right the public opinion on this subject, the performance of an act of justice

to *any* administration, is" (he says) "but a *small part* of its use; a much *more important* consideration is, its effect in producing that salutary and reasonable *confidence*, which gives the power of exertion to the government, and that concurrence which seconds its exertions among the people."

Thus far the Right Honorable Author. For my own part, if my conception concerning a government's title to confidence be not altogether an erroneous one, this title depends in no inconsiderable degree on its disposition "*to press further retrenchments:*" (p. 62.) I mean of course, in so far as, in the judgment of that government, they are not otherwise than "*proper*" ones. Yet this the Right Honorable Gentleman—a member of this same government, and that in the very next rank to the highest, and receiving (besides sinecure money) no less than 4,000*l.* a year for being so, peremptorily—and as we have seen of his own accord,—refuses to do.

He will not do any such thing: and why not? On this point we might be apt to be at a stand at least, if not at a loss, were it not for the lights with which, in another page (p. 74.) the Right Honorable Author himself has favored us. His "opinions" on the subject, he there acknowledges, are "*strong ones;*" but strong as they are, or rather because they are so strong, he will not let us know what they are? Because "*on his sole authority,*" that is, unless other opinions that in the scale of office stand yet higher than his, concurred with his, "*it would not be useful:*"—there would be *no use* in it. No use in it? what? not on a subject of such vital importance—when for the declared purpose of "setting right the public opinion on this subject," a Right Honorable Author, who knows all about it, takes up the pen, can it be that there would be no use in speaking what he thinks is right? and as much of it, as he has to speak? no use in his speaking impartially?—in speaking on both sides, and on all sides, what he thinks?

But not to go on any further in thus beating the bush, may we not in plain English venture to ask—at the bottom of all this delicacy, can any other interpretation be found than this, viz. that by those, for whose defence and for whose purposes, and to come to the point at once—under whose *influence* this work of his was written, his speaking as he thinks, and what he thinks right—his speaking out on both sides, would it in his own persuasion, have been found not endurable?

If so, here then we have a practical illustration and developement of a number of preceding hints. Here we see the character—here we see one effect and use—of that "*aristocracy of talent and virtue*" with which, in the account of remuneration, nothing but money will pass current,—nothing but money is of any value,—and which constitutes so necessary an addition to the "*aristocracy of rank and property.*"

Here we see what is, and what we are the better for, the fruit of "that principle of activity, (p. 66.) which animates men in the attainment, so much more than in the mere possession, of power and station, "and of that amusement, which, for the acquisition and improvement of talents necessary for the higher offices, gentlemen have given themselves, in passing *occasionally* through the inferior situations."

"Of the *unpopularity* and *ridicule* that has so often been attempted to be fixed on the word *confidence*," the Right Honorable Gentleman has, as he is pleased to inform us, according to his own statement (p. 61.) had "*some experience*." One little item, to whatsoever may have been the stock laid up by him of that instructive article, he may find occasion to make. To that sort of *confidence* which is "*unthinking and blind*," this "unpopularity and ridicule," he appears to look upon as not altogether "*inapplicable*," nor consequently the sort of "*attempt*" he speaks of, viz. that of fixing it on the word *confidence*, as altogether incapable of being attended with success.

But can any thing be more "*unthinking and blind*" than that confidence, which should bestow itself on an official man, howsoever Right Honorable, who in treating of a subject confessedly of high national importance, and after furnishing, in favor of one side, whatsoever information his matchless experience, his unquestioned ingenuity, his indefatigable industry, can rake together,—and feeling, on the other side of his mind, "*opinions*"—and those "*strong ones*," nor doubtless unaccompanied with an adequate knowledge of facts—of those facts from which they received their existence and their strength,—should refuse—deliberately, and peremptorily, as well as spontaneously, refuse—to furnish any the least tittle of information from that other side.

Eloquent and zealous in support of profusion, mute when the time should come for pleading in favor of retrenchment, not without compunction let him behold at least one consequence. Destitute of all competent, of all sufficiently qualified, of all officially qualified, advocates—deserted even by him, who should have been its Solicitor-general, thus it is that the cause of *Economy* is left to take its chance for finding here and there an advocate among low people, who have never been regularly called to this high *bar*: interlopers, who, destitute of all prospect of that "remuneration" which is the sole "*principle of activity that animates men in the attainment of power and station*," (p. 66.) destitute of the advantage of "*passing occasionally through even the inferior situations*," (p. 66.) are destitute of all "*talent*," destitute of all "*virtue*"—and whose productions, if, for the purpose of the argument, they could, for a moment, be supposed capable of contributing, on the ground here in question, any thing that could be conducive to the

public service, would one and all, be so many effects without a cause.

§ XII. *Concerning Pecuniary Competition—and the Use made of the Principle.*

Before the subject of *influence* is dismissed, a word or two may, perhaps, have its use, for the purpose of endeavoring to submit to the consideration of the Right Honorable Panegyrist an article of *revenue*, viz. *crown lands*, which neither on his part, nor on the part of his hero, seems to have received quite so much attention as could have been wished.

To the purpose of the present publication, a circumstance that renders this article the more material, is—that it may contribute to render more and more familiar to the eye of the reader, a *principle*, on a due estimation of which the plan hereafter to be proposed depends for every thing in it, that either promises to be in its effect eventually useful, or is in its application new.

Economy and *purity*—reduction of expense, and reduction of undue influence—in these may be seen the two distinguishable and distinguished, though intimately connected, objects, to which, speaking of the principle of *competition*, our Right Honorable Author speaks of it as having meant to be made subservient, and as having accordingly been made subservient, in the hands of Mr. Pitt. (p. 26.)

"Mr. Pitt" (he informs us p. 25.)..." looking anxiously to reforms, effected many even considerable savings.....and at the same time sacrificed an influence as minister, much more dangerous than any possessed by the crown, *because more secret and unobserved*; the extent of it indeed could be known only to himself and to those in his immediate confidence. We shall state" (continues he) "the measures....in their order, beginning with loans and lotteries,....proceeding with *private contracts*, and closing this part of the account with the profit derived from the mode irrevocably established respecting *the renewals of crown leases*. In each of which cases the influence diminished was not only extensive, but was obviously in its nature more objectionable than any that could be acquired by the disposal of *offices*; as the effect of the former was *secret and unobserved*, whereas the latter is apparent and generally known."

Thus far the Right Honorable Author: a word or two now from his obscure commentator.

Coming to crown lands (p. 34.) "The last head of saving by management" (says he) "is under that of the estates of the Crown. The Act of the 1st of Queen Anne [1] continued at the beginning of

[1] 1 Anne, st. 1. c. 7.

each succeeding reign for limiting grants of crown lands to 31 years, put a stop to the actual alienation of the property of the crown; but in its operation, had the effect of greatly adding to the influence of it, and certainly afforded no protection whatever to its revenues, as will be seen in the note below.[1] In reigns antecedent to that of Queen Anne, when grants were perpetual, the persons to whom they were made, became immediately independent of the crown, and not unfrequently gave very early proofs of that independence: whereas, by the measure adopted on the accession of the Queen, every grantee, or the person representing him, became dependent on the Minister for a renewal of his lease, for which applications were generally made at such times, and on such occasions, as were thought to afford the best hope of their being attended to, on terms favorable to his interest.

"Under this system Mr. Pitt, on coming into office, found the whole landed property of the Crown, and the income arising from it, in every way, very little exceeding 4000*l.* a year.

"*He therefore after long inquiries, and most attentive consideration*, applied a remedy in 1794, when an Act was passed,[2] by which it is provided that no lease shall be renewed till within a short period of its expiration, nor till an actual survey shall have been made by two professional men of experience and character, who are required to certify the true value of the premises to the Treasury, attested on their oaths. *No abuse can therefore take place*, nor any *undue favor be shown*, under the provisions of this law, *unless surveyors of eminence* in their line shall *deliberately perjure themselves*, or a treasury shall be found bold enough to grant leases, or renew them, at a less value than shall be certified to them, which could not escape immediate detection, as there is a clause in the act requiring an account to be laid before Parliament annually of what leases or grants shall have been made in the year preceding; for what terms or estates; the annual value, as returned on oath by the surveyors; the annual value of the last preceding survey; what rents shall have been reserved, or what fines paid; and upon what other considerations such leases shall have been respectively made.

"More strict provisions to guard against any evasion of the law could *hardly* have been devised."

Thus far our Right Honorable Author.

Where, having determined with himself to obtain for public property the best price that is to be had, Mr. Pitt pursues that principle, my humble applause follows him: But when, without

[1] In 15 years, to 1715, the whole income from crown lands, including rents, fines, and grants of all sorts, was 23,624*l.* equal to 1,500*l.*, a year. Journals of H. C. vol. xx. p. 520; and in 7 years, to 1746 was 15,600*l.*, equal to 2,228*l.*, a year. Journals, vol. xxv. p. 206.

[2] 34 Geo. III. C. 75.

sufficient reason he turns aside from that or any other principle, then my applause stops: applause, whatever in that case perseveres in following him, will be of that sort which comes from copartners and panegyrists.

When government annuities were the commodity to be disposed of, then it was that it was the choice of Mr. Pitt to have the best price: then it was that, choosing to have the best price, he adopted the mode and the only mode, by which that effect can be produced.

When leasehold interests in Crown lands were the commodity to be disposed of, then it was that it was not the choice of Mr. Pitt to have the best price. Then it was accordingly that, for fear of having the best price, care was taken *not* to employ the mode, the only mode by which any such effect can be produced.

To avoid giving birth to the undesirable effect in question, the expedient employed was (we see) an "actual survey, . . . made by two professional men of experience and character, who are required to certify the true value of the premises to the Treasury, attested on their oaths."

"Under the provision of this law," one thing the Right Honorable Gentleman endeavors to persuade us of (p. 35.)—is that "no abuse can . . . . take place, nor undue favor be shown." Why not? Because (says he) no such effect can take place "unless surveyors of eminence in their line shall deliberately perjure themselves or" . . . something else which he mentions shall take place, and which, admitting the improbability of it, I shall not repeat here.

As to *perjury* the *word* is a *strong word*, and to the purpose of causing the reader to suppose that the security provided by it is a *strong security*, more conducive than any real lover of sincerity can be well pleased to find it. But, from the pen of a veteran in *office*, and in *offices*, and in *such* offices, to whom it cannot be altogether unknown, to how prodigious an extent the people of this country are made deliberately and habitually to perjure themselves; and how fond, under the guidance of priests and lawyers, the legislation and jurisprudence of this same country have been, of causing men, always without any the smallest use, deliberately to perjure themselves:[1]—it is not without pain that a man who has any real dislike to perjury can behold this security held up to view in the character of a *real* one.

Cases there are, (it is confessed with pleasure) in which this alleged security is an efficient one: as for instance, where testimony to a matter of fact is to be given, *viva voce*, in an open judicatory, and under the check of cross examination: not that even in that case it is

[1] See "Swear not at all," &c. by the Author: printed 1813: now (1817) just published.

to the ceremony that the efficiency would be found ascribable, but to the cross-examination, and the publicity, with or without the eventual punishment. But in the case *here* in question, not one of all those elements of efficiency is to be found. The sort of perjury which the Right Honorable Gentleman endeavors to make us take for a punishable offence, suppose it, for argument sake, committed—was ever one instance known of a man being prosecuted for it as for perjury? Great would be my surprize to hear of any such case. Would so much as an indictment lie? I have not searched, nor to the present purpose does it seem worth while. Gross indeed must be the case, strong and clear; stronger and clearer than it seems in the nature of the case to afford—the proof by which, upon any such indictment, conviction must be produced.

Few, it is evident, are the sorts of articles—lands, houses, or any other such articles, coming under the head of *crown lands*, being unquestionably not of the number—few, about the value of which it may not happen to "surveyors of eminence, experience, and character" to entertain real differences of opinion; and moreover, and without the smallest imputation on that "*character*," much more without the possibility of suffering as for *perjury*, to agree in assigning such a value, as to a very considerable amount—according to circumstances, say 5, 10, 12, 15, 20, 50 per cent. (in short one knows not where to stop) greater or less than what in their opinions respectively is the true one.

The real value of the premises is the joint result of some half dozen (suppose) of circumstances on each side: whereupon on one side, (suppose again) this or that little circumstance, some how or other, fails of being taken into the account. Unless the human understanding were that perfect kind of machine which every body acknowledges it not to be, who could think of speaking of it as importing so much as a speck upon a man's character, that any such little oversight has taken place? Meantime the profit by the oversight may amount to thousands of pounds in any number.

Unfortunately for *Economy*, still more unfortunately for *Uncorruption*, the sort of contract here in question is one of those in which with a pre-eminent degree of force, interest and opportunity join, in securing to the subject of valuation, a false or under-value. What the one party, viz. the proposed lessee wants, is money: what the other party—the "discharger of duties and public trusts" wants, is *influence*. If the valuation be deficient, then, in proportion to the deficiency, both parties have what they want. Under a state of things so favorable to mutual accommodation let any one who feels bold enough, undertake to set a limit to the loss, liable to be produced to the public by the substitution of this mode of sale, to the only one which is capable of finding out the real value. In a *fancy* article, such as a villa, or a site for a villa, cent. per

cent. may be below the difference. Ten per cent.—to put, for argument's sake, a certain amount for an uncertain one—will surely be regarded as a very small allowance.

In this ten per cent. then may be seen the amount of the *saving*—or the acquisition—call it which you please, which on the occasion in question might have been made to the public, and was not made.

Thus much as to *revenue*. Then as to *influence*, "some judgment," as Mr. Rose observes (p. 37.), "may be formed by observing, that of the persons holding crown leases when the act was passed, upwards of *eighty were* members of one or the other House of Parliament; and it is hardly necessary to add" (continues he) "that in the cases of *other lessees*, the parties, who might have the means of doing so, would naturally resort to solicitations of friends for obtaining the minister's favor."

Now, in the picture thus drawn of the state of the case, as it stood at *that* time—drawn by so experienced and expert a hand—so far as concerns *influence*, I, for my own part, till some distinct ground of difference is brought to view, cannot but see a picture equally correct, of the state of the case as it stands at this moment: at this moment, viz. after and notwithstanding—not to say by reason of—the reform thus lauded. So far indeed as concerns revenue, I can not doubt but that a very considerable change—and so far as it goes, a change for the better, has been made: a change for the amount of which I take of course the account given of it by Mr. Rose. But, so far as concerns *influence*, what I should not expect to find is that any change, worth taking into account, had taken place. "*Eighty*," according to the Right Honorable Gentleman, is the number of *members* so circumstanced at that time; *eighty*,—or rather from that increasing division, which landed property, where it will serve for building, or even for sites of villas, naturally admits of, *more* than eighty—is the number which I should expect to find at present: not to speak of *expectants*, for whom, where the purpose of the argument requires it, the Right Honorable arguer knows so well how to take credit. For convincing an Honorable or Right Honorable Gentleman of the superiority of one ministry over another, ten per cent. upon any given sum will not, it is true, serve so effectually in the character of a persuasion, as thirty per cent.: but wherever the ten per cent. suffices, the abolished twenty per cent. would have been but surplusage, since thirty per cent. could do no more. The case of the villa contiguous to Chelsea Hospital—a case which, though it happened so long ago as the last session, is not yet, it is hoped, altogether out of recollection—may serve, and as well as half a hundred, for clearing and fixing our ideas on this subject. From that case may be formed some judgment, whether the impossibility of "abuse and undue favour" is

quite so near to complete, as it would be for the convenience of the Right Honorable Gentleman's acknowledged purposes, that we should believe it to be.

All this while a circumstance which has contributed in no small degree to that composure and tranquil confidence, of which my readers, if I happen to have any, may on this occasion have observed the symptoms, is—a surmise in which I have all along been indulging myself,—viz. that between the opinions of the Right Honorable Author and those of his obscure commentator there does not, on this occasion, exist, *at bottom*, any very considerable difference.

"More strict provision to guard against any invasion of the law could *hardly*" (says the Right Honorable Author) "have been devised." But it will be for the reader to judge, whether the law in question be quite so well guarded against evasion, as, by this saving word *hardly*, the argument of the Right Honorable Gentleman is guarded against any such impertinent charge as that of having said the thing that is *not*. Neither on this nor on any other occasion, could it easily have escaped a sagacity such as his, that a mode of sale, the sure effect of which is to perpetuate a constantly *inferior* price, is not quite so favorable either to increase of revenue or to diminution of influence, as a mode of sale, the sure effect of which is—to obtain, on each occasion the *very best* price.

Pecuniary competition—Auction—having, and in other instances to so great an extent—by this same hero, and with the special applause of this same panegyrist been employed, as and for the best contrived mode or instrument for obtaining, for such articles as government has to dispose of, the very best price,—having been applied, and with so much success in the case of government annuities—having been applied, and with so much success, in the case of contracts for stores—(for when there is no fraud, it is in form only and not in effect that, in this case, there is any difference between *competition* and *auction* in the common acceptation of the word)—and moreover in the case of the very sort of article here in question—in the case of *lands*—sale of leasehold interests presenting themselves to view in every newspaper, and even *letting by auction* in the first instance, having nothing new in it, it would be a most instructive explanation, to us whose station is *without-doors*, if in his next edition the Right Honorable Author would have the goodness to inform us, how it happened, that when in the course of her voyage Economy had reached the latitude of the *crown lands* she all of a sudden stopped short, and, instead of the best instrument for fishing out the best price, took up with so weak and ill-contrived an one. Is it that in the case of lands, *auction* is less well adapted than in the case of goods to an obtainment of the best price?—less well adapted to the obtaining that best price for leasehold interests in

lands, to be paid for in money, than for *money* to be paid for in *goods*? On the contrary, in the case of goods, to be supplied to government by contract, as in the case in question, with the benefit of competition, the Right Honorable Gentleman, if not already informed, might with little difficulty be informed of cases upon cases, in which the rigour of the principle of competition receives a very convenient softening, from expedients which have no application in the case of lands.

In default of such full and authentic lights, as nothing short of the *experience*, joined to the condescension, of the Right Honorable Gentleman, would afford us, it may be matter of amusement at any rate, if of nothing better,—to us whose station is on the *outside* of the curtain,—to figure to ourselves, in the way of guess and pastime, what, on the occasion in question, may have been passing *behind* it.

Before so desirable a head of reform as that in question could be brought even into the imperfect state dressed up as above by the ingenuity of our Right Honorable author, "*long inquiries, and most attentive consideration*" (we are informed by him, p. 35.) took place. Of these "*long inquiries*," no inconsiderable portion, if one who knows nothing may be allowed to guess, were naturally directed, to so desirable an object, as that of knowing, what, in case of a change of the sort proposed, the *eighty* members, of whom we have seen him speaking, would be disposed to think of it: and of the "*attentive consideration*," no inconsiderable portion (it is equally natural to suppose) was bestowed upon the *objections*, which an *innovation* of this sort could not but have given birth to, in so many Honorable and Right Honorable minds.

With a set of hobgoblins, known among school boys, by the collective appellation of the *secret advisers of the crown*, and of whom, certain *sceptics*, (such has been the growth of infidelity!) have of late (it seems) been found *Arians* or *Socinians* enough to question the existence,—our author's hero—there can not be any doubt, supposing them always to have had existence,—must have had to fight, on this as on so many other occasions, many a hard battle. Of such warfare, the result, on the occasion here in question, seems to have been a sort of compromise. To restraint upon the dilapidation of the revenue, *Fee, Faw, Fum* could be, and accordingly were brought to submit:—and thus it was, that sale, grounded on collusive valuation, was substituted to absolute gift. To the diminution of influence, *Fee, Faw, Fum* could not and would not be brought to submit: they would have gone off to *Hanover* or to *Hampshire* first:—and thus it was that sale, grounded on collusive valuation, was preferred to sale *for the best price*.

A

DEFENCE

OF

The Constitution

OF

GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND,

As by Law Established,

AGAINST THE

INNOVATING AND LEVELLING ATTEMPTS

OF

THE FRIENDS

TO

ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS

AND

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

BY THE RIGHT HON.

JOHN SOMERS, LORD SOMERS.

Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari.

1817.

NO. XX. *Pam.* VOL. X. Y

A

DEFENCE,

&c. &c.

THAT our country is at present labouring under very considerable and general distress, no man can doubt. To whatever remote causes this to be lamented effect ought to be attributed, it is immediately produced by the sudden change from a long-continued War to Peace, and the various consequences arising out of that change.

Distresses, whether more felt or not, are always most noticed in and by the poorer classes. At a time when such is unhappily our situation, and when mischievous and ill-designing persons are endeavouring to avail themselves of it, in order to stir up those poorer classes against the established Constitution and system of their Country, which so eminently protects them, I take up my pen, in the hopes of guarding my fellow subjects against one fallacious and mischievous cry by which it is at this time attempted to misguide them. It is not my intention in this short treatise to defend or condemn the present or any other Administration, or to argue that all the French Revolutionary Governments terminating in the despotism of Napoleon Bonaparte, did or did not aim at the ruin of the British Empire and the misery of the People of Great Britain and Ireland. These topics I leave to the impartial consideration of all concerned and interested.

The object of my attack (if the defence of what is established against something unknown and untried can be called so), is a proposed measure commonly distinguished by the appellation of *Parliamentary Reform.*

As far as I understand the language of the advocates for this measure (many of whom I sincerely believe to mean well, but some to be the most pernicious of Demagogues), they approve our Monarchy and admit our Constitution of Government to be good. I

am not sure if they have not declared it to be the best now in existence. Whether I am right in these suppositions, or either of them, I shall doubtless be told; but whether I am or not, I hesitate not to assert, that in my own opinion, the present Constitution of Government prevalent in Great Britain is practically the best that does, or ever has existed. To demonstrate this, I readily allow is difficult, from the nature of the proposition; but presumptively to prove it, is easy. Thus: More actual liberty is enjoyed under our happily mixed, and limited Monarchy, than under any other Government in Europe. That is, there is more attention to the poorer classes, and less power of oppression in the Government over the people, or in the higher classes over the lower; more general protection of individual rights; less invidious distinction between the privileged and other orders; more easy attainment of superior riches and rank; sufficient dignity and respectability without too much power in the Church: In short, nearly every thing which can reasonably be wished for, subject doubtless, and daily, to deterioration from lapse of time, adventitious events, and the tendency in all worldly things unamended to disimprove.

These last observations may be considered by Parliamentary Reformers as an admission against my own, and in favour of their argument; I do not think that they are so, and make them deliberately and sincerely.

The Friends of Parliamentary Reform will mistake me indeed, if because I am a conscientious opposer of their favourite measure, they should suppose me an enemy to Reform. Without occasional reforms and re-approaching to first principles, every human institution must gradually decay, and ultimately be dissolved, just as the human body without wholesome food to nourish it must be destroyed. But then, in any projected public amendment, we ought to be sure we *are* re-approaching to such first principles, and not substituting in their place novel and visionary systems. Because the human body requires wholesome food in moderate quantities, it neither requires to be fed with poison nor to be stuffed and overloaded with an immoderate quantity of otherwise wholesome nourishment. Is that body sick? clear away the obstructions that oppress it, but do not attempt to re-organize it, since its texture as ordained by the Almighty, must be better woven and more calculated to preserve health than any we are likely to invent or substitute in its place. I am aware that it might be objected to this last argument and allusion of mine, that it is absurd, in the manner I have done, to compare a texture woven by Providence with one of human workmanship and invention — the constitution of a human body with that of a State. To which I reply — This last observation, which I suggest as likely to be urged against my own argument, is sound against the arguments of those

who think that the Constitution of a State can be moulded at will by human hands, or devised at once by human intellect. I think quite otherwise. From the earliest periods of maturity, I theoretically judged otherwise: namely, that time, habit, and attachment, still more arising from the dispensations of Providence than the act of man, are requisite effectually to substantiate and firmly to establish a Constitution of Government. Such were my sentiments when, at the age of one and twenty, I took my seat in the House of Commons; which have since been fully confirmed by thirty-five years' service in Parliament, and some knowledge of, and observation on the public events which have taken place during that period; and on the principles arising from these sentiments, I have invariably voted against Parliamentary Reform, experience of those years having, to my judgment, unquestionably and practically confirmed opinions which reason originally imprinted on my mind. What is Government, but the art or power of managing mankind unable to manage themselves? What is good Government, but the art or power of managing mankind for their own real good, to the honour of God, and promotion of religion, virtue, and happiness? Unless liberty furthers these objects, it is at best an empty name, but more likely a cloak for licentiousness. On these principles let us take a view of the proposed measure of Parliamentary Reform, as far as we can reduce it within the scope of our observation. It is a proposed radical change in the construction of the most powerful branch of the Legislature. Had I judged ill of the British Constitution, I should have feared such a radical change at once, which I am convinced could even in such a case only have been beneficially effected by degrees, assimilating the changes gradually to the body on which they are to operate: but I judge well of the British Constitution, and the better part of the Reformers judge well of it also, though perhaps not quite so highly as I do, or as they themselves may have occasion hereafter to judge of it, if, like the old man supported by a staff, they should in an ill hour be persuaded to throw that staff away: the staff has no merit in itself, it is only meritorious as it is useful. The same may be said of the form in which British Representation is constructed: not because it is so constructed, but because it produces good is it meritorious. Whatever our present distress, and whether or not caused in any degree by misconduct or impolicy of our Ministers during periods of great perplexity, has not the present state of the representation borne us through difficulties and dangers apparently insurmountable, and preserved our freedom and independence?

That these times are productive of many public and private evils, and those very generally suffered, I have admitted, and both feel and lament. But ought we to expect every thing? We have not been fighting for aggrandizement; we have fought for inde-

pendence, and we have preserved it, and in doing so re-established the military glory of Britain. Ought we not to submit to some temporary deprivations for such objects? Is it not repining (irreligious and unmanly repining), to be discontented with what under Providence we have so nobly preserved? Is it not madness and folly of the highest pitch, in a moment of spleen to throw away the very foundation on which, in spite of enemies, we have re-erected our independence and glory? And on which, judging of the future by the past, if wise enough to retain and cherish it, we shall probably restore every other species of worldly prosperity, for which the hardy Sons of Britain (when honourably called upon), can as gallantly and perseveringly contend as even for their existence. This foundation, on which we rest, this staff that supports us, which some would so wantonly throw away, is our Constitution as it now stands, of which the House of Commons, as now actually constituted, is a most essential part. Why, since it has so well answered its great purpose, should we change it? Before I consent to do so, I must first be convinced that such change will necessarily produce very great public good. Now what is the public good held forth? I do not precisely know; but I surmise, or have heard occasionally, one topic in favour of such change to be, that it is to render the representation of the people equal, or more equal than it now is. In order to persuade me that there is a sufficient reason for throwing away an excellent thing we already possess, you must convince me that equalizing the Representation would certainly be a great and practical improvement. Equalizing property, equalizing rank, equalizing power, generally equalizing mankind, is by most men held to be impracticable; contrary to the order of the universe and the nature of man, who is naturally unequal to his fellow man in mental and bodily faculties, and by nature calculated and intended for inequality of political power.

Are these things doubted? Are they not agreeable to common sense? Have they not been proved by constant experience? And has not the late mad attempt to establish equality in France peculiarly and unquestionably manifested its shocking and mischievous absurdity? An attempt to establish natural and political equality in man then is absurd: why should it be wise to aim at it in the representation of man? Unless there is some cabalistical excellence in the word *equality*, which I believe has been pretty clearly found not to be the case, I can see no good reason why Representation should be better by being rendered equal. If I am referred to a maxim once much in vogue—that no Briton ought to be taxed without being represented—I admit it to be one excellent principle of the British Constitution, that the subject cannot be taxed but by bodies of men interested to promote the good of the country, and consequently not to tax the subjects of that country but

for their own good. This constitutes virtual Representation, and produces every advantage which could be theoretically expected from actual or equal Representation.

One great evil, however, arising from the present state of our Representation, it is said, is—that we are heavily taxed. That this country is most heavily taxed is certainly much to be regretted; but it does not follow because we are heavily taxed, that we are improperly taxed. If the weight of taxation we labour under has preserved our independence, if without it we could not have preserved our independence, it is well laid, and can only be considered as the price for that blessing, and cannot be considered as too high a price. If, on the contrary, it has been unnecessarily laid upon us, it is in the strictest sense a heavy grievance; but even in such case every man who judges with coolness and impartiality, will consider the dangers we have been struggling against, threatening our existence as a nation, and be ultimately unwilling to condemn exertions, which, if not actually necessary, might honestly appear to be so to our Rulers, who could not justify doing less than appeared to their judgment necessary for the salvation of the country. Upon this subject how different have been the *bona fide* opinions of great politicians, and how doubtful are the merits of the question now, whether we could have had a safe Peace with France until the overthrow of her revolutionary strength and system? To these remarks I have only to add, that under the present Representation of the People, which has laid our burthens upon us, we have overthrown that revolutionary strength and system, and have preserved our independence.

The policy of our Representatives then may be doubted; but it cannot be proved to have been unwise, unless you can prove that Britain would have been unsubdued by France without the exertions she has made: at any rate the sincere intentions of our Representatives to promote the good of their country appear to my understanding unquestionable; and they have preserved us with means of re-attaining prosperity, although not perhaps of immediately enjoying it.

With all our well-founded hostility to despotism, it rests only on the ground, that man by nature is too frail to be entrusted with it, almost always abusing it. We fear not despotism in God; in fact it cannot subsist in Him; because God is perfect, consequently wise, just, benevolent, and merciful, and must govern accordingly, not despotically; which last term implies governing not a loved creature or subject, but a despised, perhaps hated slave. Now the very same principle which justly condemns despotism, proves the necessity of Government in Human Societies, viz.—the frailty of man, who cannot, of mere will, well govern others or himself: which assertion being incontestable, what ought to be

the texture of Human Government? such, I contend, as must decidedly incline to produce the real good of the governed. Such Government approaches the nearest to God's Government. But does it follow of course that the approximation in kind to God's Government (which must be good government,) is to be produced by equality of Representation, or by equality in any thing else? Prove your proposition, Parliamentary Reformers, and I submit; but expect me not to submit to your *gratis dictum* or mere assumption of an unproved fact, or upon such grounds to become in effect the worst of rebels, because endeavouring to overthrow the best constituted of Governments. That an attempt to introduce human equality is mischievous, has been pretty clearly proved by the French Revolution of late years. The reverse fact that to avoid any attempt at Equality in Human Institutions is good, has been pretty strongly shown by the British Revolution of 1688, the leaders of which, among other acts of wise and moral forbearance in preserving the Religion and Liberty of Britain, meddled not with the Representation established by law and ancient usage, much less introduced into it Equality.

But our ancestors in 1688, Parliamentary Reformers tell us did not go half far enough. The good they did to their country, and to us their descendants, by doing what they did, and stopping where they stopped, we know experimentally, by the liberty and good Government we have since enjoyed: the evil they would have done, had they gone further, we may conjecture on pretty strong foundations, from the miseries and despotism produced by such conduct in France.

These miseries and that despotism are the Parliamentary Reformers (many innocently and through error, but some intentionally,) now preparing for us; and against being deluded by their folly or their wiles it is, that I wish to sound the warning voice.—Man is a compound of wisdom and folly: his wisdom I could dilate upon, were it consonant to my present object; but that is to guard against his folly. It is the height of folly to suppose that equality in Representation will necessarily produce good. The very necessity of Representation at all in a great state, implies that the whole bulk of the nation cannot determine for themselves, who send representatives, that a comparatively small number may do that which a vast number cannot do; namely, provide laws and regulations for the well governing the society or community. What is required as to the mode of electing such representatives? To be chosen equally? No! but to be so chosen that they must have every possible inducement to consult and provide for the good of the community.

If Government is instituted because men cannot govern them-

selves—if Government is instituted with a view to the good of the governed—if men unable to govern themselves are still less able to govern others of mere will—ought not Government to be constituted so that the men who compose it should have every inducement, every spur which the mind of man is capable of being subjected to, to seek the good of the governed? Will equal representation produce this happy consequence?

If man is such as I have described him, such as the Parliamentary Reformers must admit him to be on some of their own principles, such as the fact is evident that he is, a creature for the most part unable well to govern either himself or others of *mere will*, what an extraordinary recipé for the cure of bad Government, or the improvement of good, must a system be, the actual and avowed object of which is, as far as possible, to render the mere will of the most ignorant men of the community the criterion of Government?

Such was the sovereign will of the French people, which we have not all of us forgotten, and such must be the sovereign will of any people. Is it not likely, if according to the plan of the most ardent, and in some respects I must admit, the most consistent of the Parliamentary Reformers, equal Representation was substituted in the place of the present Representation in the House of Commons, that that House, wholly purged, if you will, from all influence of the Crown, of the Nobles, and of every species of Aristocracy, elected merely by the mass of the people, would necessarily, like every other torrent unresisted, overwhelm whatever it met with in its tremendous advance, and that the first sacrifices to equal Representation would be the King, the Lords, and the Church, and with them the so much boasted Constitution of Britain? The horrors to follow, you may read in the history of the French Revolution; but our conduct in such a deplorable case would incur the additional blot, that whereas France exchanged a previous arbitrary Government for their miseries, we should have sacrificed to ours a Government the best constituted in the world, the work of ages, under Providence the work of the wisdom and virtue of ages, the most valuable legacy that was ever left by ancestors to their posterity, the source of more blessings than are enjoyed, or ever have been enjoyed, by any other nation on earth.

The picture is not over-painted: the principle that the will of the people is all in all, which is that of universal suffrage, being once established, what mere excrescences in the Constitution must the King and Lords appear, and an House of Commons elected by a majority of the lowest members of society, I suppose to be annually re-elected by the same description of persons, could neither want the inclination, or avoid the necessity of annihilating

the higher ranks, so uncongenial to their equalizing system. If the inclination of an House of Commons so constructed did not induce them to do this, which, backed by the mob, they must have power to do, the necessity of complying with the will and inclination of their Constituents, must oblige them to effect it. If theory is on my side, in France you have seen the practice. Could the Parliamentary Reformers have a chance of establishing their own system, bad as I may judge it, they might have something to say for their proposed Reform; but they have none: it must end, and that soon, in the despotism of one, after numerous intermediate evils. But, exclaim the moderate Parliamentary Reformers, we mean no such thing as universal suffrage. You may not mean it; but if you overturn the present Representation in Parliament, you must have it, as the ladder by which some future despot will ascend. What other principle have you on which to erect your change? More members for counties, say some; more members for large cities, say others; more weight to population, more weight to the landed, more weight to the commercial interest, exclaim many and various persons. How can these all agree, and what can this end in, if the serpent be not crushed in his egg, but in universal suffrage? The progress of this theory is as clear as that two and two make four, and its results as certain. To destroy and not to build is its object, and destruction must be its consequence.

To abolish Corruption we are told is the object of Parliamentary Reform. Corruption and venality, like other vicious tendencies, cannot be eradicated from the mind of man, till you abolish the effects of the Fall, or whatever else has implanted in us a tendency to vice. Is there more corruption and venality in Great Britain than in other countries? I affirm much less.—Do not our wives manifest more delicate chastity, and our judges more inflexible integrity, than you will meet with elsewhere in Europe? or in America? or in the east? or in the south? But Voters for Members of Parliament and Members of Parliament themselves are venal: I contend not there is no venality in Great Britain; but on the contrary, that there must be more or less venality in every human society, until you can alter the nature of man; but I really think there is less corruption of manners inducing amongst other evils venality in Great Britain, than in other countries, and I have alluded to grounds for my opinion.—Is there less genuine Religion amongst us, than amongst others? Amidst some enthusiasm and absurdity, more through the abuse of liberty than the want of it, I believe there is more genuine Religion in Great Britain than in all the Continent of Europe, and that this last fact will hardly be contested. We have certainly less mummery of Religion than elsewhere; and just in proportion to the absence of false Religion has true Religion

flourished in the world, excepting in one solitary instance, a moment of extreme convulsion, the result of something very like general Parliamentary Reform, when the horrible but mad attempt was made to abolish all Religion.—Some who have lately figured at the meetings for Parliamentary Reform have honestly told the moderate Reformers of that description, in effect, that they are either fools or rogues; in this one opinion I cannot wholly disagree with these more violent Reformers. To change an Established Constitution on no principle is folly, and so dangerous a folly, that I cannot conceive any foundation for such an attempt but infatuation or dishonesty; and if you will have a principle, there is none but Universal Suffrage and Equal Representation, which once having you will very soon be without any Suffrage or Representation at all, or any other Civil Rights.—Madmen, then stop in your wild career; respect the wisdom, respect the virtue, respect the blood of your ancestors, who exerted the two former and shed the latter to obtain for you your present excellent free practical Constitution of Government, building on old foundations, and only changing or amending what was obviously and practically bad. They knew that a Constitution was not to be made in a day. Habits, attachments, interests, as I have already said, must be favourable to a system of Government, or it has little chance of standing. Remove the Government you are attached to—you derive advantage from—you are used to—for something new, and the chances are a million to one you have soon no Government at all: this is just what the demagogues wish—let all Government be at an end, and they may hope to rise in the scramble, and establish a despotism of their own on the necks both of Aristocracy and People.

In the whole country enough will be found who have neither Property nor Character, nor any thing else to lose, who will readily join and support the scramble, for the chance of gaining something in the end, in the mean time enjoying the robbery, and plunder, and devastation, which will be gratifying to all the worst of passions, but misery to the good and wise; to those who have property or families; to those who wish to live as intellectual creatures, and not mere animals, or worse than brutes. The scramble must end ere long, and despotism succeed, the cure of anarchy and scourge of mankind. Then O Parliamentary Reformers, who mean your Country's good, what will you have gained, and at what expense? Even the villainous amongst you will most of them have met with their deserts by perishing in misery and disgrace. But to them I address myself not: a short address I make to those of you who mean well, which I doubt not are many, and it is this:—for God's sake think thoroughly before you

act. But to well-informed Britons in general I principally address myself, and to them I say—Consider what Man is—what Government is—and what the Government of Great Britain at this moment actually is. Has that Government in your opinion gone too far in the wars you have been engaged in? Has it loaded you more with debt and taxes than you think need have been? Has it seemed on some occasions not so attentive as it ought to have been to your wants and distresses? Perhaps it may have been so: they are men who have composed your Government after all; and the principle on which I so earnestly caution you against destructive innovation is, that men are frail, and that no system of Equality is consistent with that frailty, but in fact only calculated to stimulate and call that frailty into action, and by flattering you with the hopes of false liberty, to destroy the true. This natural frailty of Man must necessarily introduce itself into all human Governments more or less; it may have done so, it must have done so into ours; but if less into ours than any other, shall we throw away the substance for the shadow? The Substance is a Government that upon the whole protects us in the enjoyment of Civil Rights, of Religion, Morality, Property, Security. The Shadow, a Government theoretically equal, that cannot protect us at all, but will leave us to be devoured by wild beasts. Pause, Britons, and recal to mind the motto of our ancestors:

Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari.

This does not mean that you should never alter Laws: this is not the system of your present Legislators, who are continually endeavouring to amend your Laws. In truth, I think too much of this kind, rather than too little, is the practice under your present system of Legislation. But it is well intended; sometimes does good; and when it does not, but rather the contrary, the fundamentals of your Constitution are left sound, and as long as that is the case you have the δος που στω, "the give me on which I may stand" of Archimedes; on which resting, you may preserve your liberties, but which being thrown away, you must sink together with them, and through your own fault.

Has the Parliament, as now constituted, never reformed abuses? never saved the Country and her Liberties? What did she, even in the reprobated reign of Charles the Second, in 1688, in 1715, in 1745, after the American war, and during the French Revolution? Had she not, like a true parent, preserved you in these periods of distress, you would long ago have been a Province of France.

In policy then, if not in gratitude, preserve her now, and where the motto justly applies, say to the Parliamentary Reformers,

Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari;

as your ancestors nobly said to the Church when she threatened the liberties of their Country, which your Parliamentary Reformers are doing at this time. Reformers have their decoys now, as the Church had then; may it be hereafter said that with equal wisdom and resolution we withstood the intrigues of both: Those of a foreign Church as it were naturalized, and of native enemies, each disguising under sophistry and a pretence of public good, the deadly blow they have been respectively aiming at our country. But I mark a wrong quarry, and therefore shoot in vain, I may be told. The object of Parliamentary Reformers is to restore the Constitution to its ancient and original simplicity and purity; that is, not to make a new Constitution, but to restore the old; not to change, but to re-establish; and when they say Give us our rights, they do not mean theoretical new rights, as was the case with the French, but old-established rights, of which they have been unjustly deprived. This certainly would alter the question; but let us examine upon what grounds the above assertion rests. It is of consequence to both sides to do so. Before the Revolution of 1688, Parliaments once called, continued Parliaments with all the powers of legislation until dissolved by the Crown. At the Revolution they were rendered triennial; that is to say, an act was passed which *ipso facto* dissolved them at the end of three years from their commencement, if not sooner dissolved by the Crown. A sincere desire practically to gratify the people in every wish which seemed to have reason in it, occasioned this arrangement. The second Parliament of Charles the Second, which continued for the protracted term of eighteen years, had been too subservient to the Crown, and the long Parliament of Charles the First had destroyed the Constitution.

These were strong facts; practical amendment seemed requisite; and no other presented itself to our constitutional ancestors, but that of fixing a period beyond which no Parliament should be capable of sitting or continuing. The only remaining question was, what that period should be; three years were fixed, and Parliaments became triennial. I do not know that I can illustrate this subject better, than by transcribing Bishop Burnet's observations thereon and statement thereof, as contained in his History of his own Times.

Folio Edition, Vol. 2, Page 106.

"When this failed (a bill to exclude members of parliament from places,) another attempt was made in the House of Lords; in a bill that was offered, enacting, that a session of Parliament should be held every year, and a new Parliament be summoned every third year, and that the present parliament should be dis-

solved within a limited time. The statutes for annual parliaments in King Edward the First and King Edward the Third's time, are well known. But it is a question whether the words *if need be*, falls upon the whole act, or only upon these words, *or oftener*; it is certain these acts were never observed; and the non-observance of them was never complained of as a grievance. Nor did the famous act in King Charles the First's time carry the necessity of holding a session further than to once in three years. Antiently, considering the haste and hurry in which parliaments sat, an annual parliament might be no great inconvenience to the nation. But by reason of the slow method of sessions now, an annual parliament in time of peace would become a very insupportable grievance.

A parliament of long continuance seemed to be very dangerous either to the Crown or to the nation: if the conjuncture and their proceedings gave them much credit, they might grow very uneasy to the Crown, as happened in Charles the First's time; or in another situation of affairs they might be so practised upon by the Court, that they might give all the money and all the liberties of England up, when they were to have a large share of the money and were to be made the instruments of tyranny, and it was in King Charles the Second's time. It was likewise hoped that frequent parliaments would put an end to the great expense candidates put themselves to in Elections; and that it would oblige the members to behave themselves so well, both with relation to the public and in their private deportment, as to recommend them to their electors at three years' end: Whereas, when a parliament was to sit many years, members covered with privileges were apt to take great liberties, forget that they represented others, and took care only of themselves. So it was thought that England would have a truer representative, when it was chosen anew every third year, than when it run on to the end of a reign. All that was objected against this was, that frequent elections would make the freeholders proud and insolent, when they knew that applications must be made to them at the end of three years: this would establish a faction in every body that had a right to an election; and whereas now an election put men to a great charge all at once, then the charge must be perpetual all the three years, in laying in for a new election, when it was known how soon it must come round."

The Bishop proceeds to state this bill passed both Houses, (this being in the year 1693,) and then goes on thus:—

"The King let the bill lie for some time on the table, so that men's eyes and expectations were much fixed on the issue of it. But in conclusion he refused to pass it: so the session ended in ill

humour. The rejecting a bill, though an unquestionable right of the Crown, has been so seldom practised, that the two Houses are apt to think it an hardship when there is a bill denied."

(*Page* 133.)

This was in the following year, 1694.

"With the supply bills, as the price or bargain for them, the bill for frequent parliaments went on; it enacted that a new parliament should be called every third year, and that the present parliament should be dissolved before the first of January, 1695-6; and to this the royal assent was given. It was received with great joy, many fancying that all their laws and liberties were now the more secure, since this was passed into a law. Time must tell what effects it will produce, whether it will put an end to the great corruption with which elections were formerly managed, and to all those other practices that accompanied them. Men that intended to sell their own votes within doors, spared no costs to buy the votes of others at elections. But now it was hoped we should see a golden age, wherein the character men were in, and reputation they had, would be the prevailing consideration in elections. And by this means it was hoped, that our constitution, in particular that part of it which related to the House of Commons, would again recover both its strength and reputation, which was now very much sunk; for corruption was so generally spread, that it was believed every thing was carried by that method."

My first observation on these quotations from Burnet is that I feel myself much gratified in having so well agreed with him respecting Parliaments indefinitely long; for what I have said of the long Parliaments in the reigns of Charles the First and Second, was written before I recalled to mind his sentiments respecting them, which are obviously much the same as those I had previously declared. I feel gratified in having agreed with Bishop Burnet, because though some failings are easily discoverable in his character, I believe him to have been an honest man, a constitutional Whig, not deficient in understanding, and certainly much acquainted with the secrets and intrigues, as well as with the general history of his own times, which he writes. He evidently was not blind to the corruption of those times, on which he descants so severely; I suspect myself, somewhat too severely; however, be that as it may, thinking of them as he expresses himself, he seems very doubtful of the efficacy of the triennial bill in removing those corruptions, though so strongly impressed with the mischiefs which had arisen from long indefinite Parliaments. He was so doubtful (I think it may fairly be inferred from his own observations on the subject,) because he feared other mischiefs likely to

arise from fixing so short a period for the duration of parliaments as three years. Unless it would eradicate the source of bribery, unless it would extinguish corruption in electors, the measure was obviously liable to the objections he states to have been urged against it; and in fact those very evils did flow from it, which necessitated that strong measure I admit (especially as it affected the parliament then in existence,) of afterwards prolonging the duration of parliaments, and rendering them septennial, as they now are. Had triennial Parliaments been the birth-right of Englishmen, had they been an essential part of our old Constitution, I admit the Septennial Act would not merely have been a strong measure, but a change and infringement of the Constitution. But was it so? Wast he Septennial Act any thing more in its spirit than an amendment of a new law, which had been found to carry its principle too far, without abandoning that principle; the Septennial Act as completely militating against the evils of an indefinitely long Parliament as a triennial, without being liable to the opposite evils arising from eternal canvas, which, with our eyes open, and our understandings clear, need not be insisted on? But before I proceed further in my statement or arguments, it is but fair to Parliaments as now constituted to observe, that they have not only abridged the former oppressive prerogatives of the Crown, but have further done all in their power to check bribery in elections, and also divested themselves (the two Houses of the Legislature I think I may venture to affirm) of every part of that load of privileges complained of by Bishop Burnet, which was really oppressive, or the retaining of which is not absolutely necessary or highly beneficial to the kingdom, by strengthening and contributing to preserve its free Constitution.

As to the statutes in favour of annual Parliaments in the reign of the first Edwards of the Norman line, the certainty stated by Burnet that these acts were never observed, and that the non-observance of them was never complained of as a grievance, evidently contradicts the fact that Annual Parliaments in any sense were an established and essential part of our ancient Constitution; and the statement of our author in this respect is manifestly borne out by history. Before the days of Edward the First, according to Burnet, annual parliaments were in no sense a part of our Constitution; for in as much as they were ever rendered so (he says,) they were first enacted in Edward the First's reign. In order to render them in any sense then part of the constitution (if there really was any statute relative to them in Edward the First's time, which I cannot find in the Statutes at large,) it was judged necessary to re-enact the provision for annual parliaments in the reign of Edward's grandson, the third of that name among the descend-

ants of William the First. And yet this provision, even after the enactment of this statute, was not generally observed, nor was its being omitted to be observed complained of as a grievance; and in the reign of Charles the First was passed the famous act (as it is stiled by the historian of his own times,) which only at that period rendered it necessary to have a session of parliament once in three years, by no means confining the duration of parliaments to any prescribed or enacted length of time; such was the Triennial Act of Charles the First; and similar, certainly, was the Annual Act of Edward the Third, which is thus concisely worded:—

Statute Anno Quarto, Edward III. Cap. 14.

"Ensement est accorde que parliament soit tenu chescun an unefoitz ou plus si mestier soit."

Item.—It is accorded that a parliament shall be holden every year once, and more often if need be.

This statute clearly does not enact that a new parliament shall be elected every year; but merely that a parliament shall be held, that is, shall meet once, or oftener if need be, every year.

Now I ask any fair or rational man, whether it is restoring a constitution of government to its ancient and original simplicity and purity, to render it that which it never was, otherwise than by accident; for undoubtedly in ancient times many parliaments have been summoned and dissolved by the King in the same year, but no instance can be produced in which a parliament summoned by the King has been *ipso facto* dissolved by virtue of any existing law, by which it was rendered annual, or prohibited from continuing for more than a year; or when a parliament has continued longer than a year under and by virtue of one or more royal prorogations, that any serious or general complaint of a breach of the constitution has been made. Had a parliament, after the passing of the Triennial Act by King William during his reign, or that of his successor Queen Anne, sat beyond its legal term of three years, is there any doubt of the illegality of such a proceeding having been noticed? or, in like manner, after the passing of the Septennial Act in the beginning of the reign of George the First, should we ever have quietly submitted, or should we now submit to the continuance of a parliament to the period of eight or more years? If the answer to these questions of mine is, as it must be, a negative, is it possible to believe that annual parliaments were heretofore part of the Constitution, as septennial are now? and if they were not, the talking of the ancient purity and simplicity of the Constitution being founded on such annual parliaments is nonsense or misrepresentation. When it was neither advantageous for King or people that a parliament should continue for more than or so

much as a year, it was dissolved sooner by royal prerogative, just as it now is, when reasons occur to the advisers of the Crown, that it should not sit for more than one, two, or three years, or any other period shorter than the seven; but otherwise, till the triennial act of King William passed, parliaments continued to sit indefinitely as to time, interrupted by royal prorogations; the very existence of the ancient power of the Crown to declare which, militates most forcibly against the idea of legally established annual parliaments, in the sense that new parliaments should be elected every year. In the obvious sense of the statute of Edward the third, that parliaments should meet once every year, or oftener if need be, is not that now constantly the case, and has it not been so for generations, though certainly not so in older times?

The simplicity of the times, not of the constitution, produced annual parliaments formerly, as the complicated systems which have since resulted out of the more intricate politics of later years have so lengthened the duration of parliaments, as to require a fixed period being put by law to the possibility of their duration. The principle was practically good, and therefore a fit amendment to be engrafted into the constitution; but the mode of carrying the principle into effect was found practically productive of inconvenience and mischief, because the period fixed was too short, and therefore it was lengthened. Such are the grounds on which, with the heartiest good wishes to my country, I am desirous that her legislature always should act, steadily pursuing practical good; for the blessings of our established constitution are actual, not imaginary, as they are the produce of practical wisdom, not theoretical nonsense.

It is not, certainly, because our representation is equal, that we are comparatively with our neighbours happy and free, but because the constitution of government established in our country, by whatever means or causes produced, (for which consult the History of England, not the brain-sick visions of parliamentary reformers,) is upon the whole calculated for the good of the subject and of the people governed. Once more then I ask you, will you exchange this positive, this humanly speaking superlative good, for wild, visionary, wicked speculations? If you do so, you deserve to lose that good. But I have a better opinion of the good sense and integrity of my countrymen—I speak not of the populace—it is not that I contemn the populace, who are perhaps the bulk, certainly a very considerable portion of the community. If I did so, my arguments ought, indeed, to have little weight; for they must be founded in presumption, in arrogance, in pride, and in a spirit of oppression. If the system of the government is not

calculated to look to the good of the bulk of the community, or of a very considerable portion of it, however ignorant, however liable, from that ignorance, to be imposed on by designing men, of more education and information than themselves, such system of government must be radically bad, because the only rational and legitimate object of government is the good of the governed, of which what we call the populace constitutes so large a portion, though in this country, perhaps, a less portion than in any other.

But follows it, because the happiness and the well-doing of the populace or multitude are, and ought to be attended to, that the populace or multitude themselves are to be made judges of their own good, or of any good? I say no: because they are very little capable of judging of either. Am I, therefore, arguing that they are to be submitted to the mere will of one man, or of any description of men? Certainly not; I have spoken my sentiments of mere human will: but I aver the best human government is that which forswears equality of every kind, and poises the powers of government so wisely as to dispense, as far as possible, protection and justice to all ranks of men—and I further aver that the established constitution of government in this country (compared with all other existing governments,) approaches the nearest to acting thus. Has it not protected the multitude when it enacted the Poor laws? What other government has adopted such a system, and is not the landed interest at this moment, in England, almost sinking under the weight of this attention to the poorest classes? I must be allowed to make this additional averment, that if you attempt to establish any thing like equality in our system, you destroy it. You destroy all the good, all the happiness, all the freedom resulting from it. It is a government of rank, of orders, of degrees, not of equality. If you will have equality, say at once, for it is the truth —we will radically destroy the British constitution, in order to establish something of our own which we prefer. This would be fair; but to such statesmen I should reply—that government which you prefer will never exist elsewhere than in your imagination, and all you would gain by its temporary or rather apparent establishment, would be, I must repeat, to have a shadow instead of a substance. Remember that sentiment of a great English poet, and a great politician too, but in the latter capacity prone to republicanism, whose good sense, however, could not help declaring,

> ———" For Orders and Degrees
> " Jar not with liberty."

It is equality which jars with liberty, because equality is impossible amongst men, in the animate or inanimate world here, or in any mode of terrestrial existence we can either know or conceive.

Yet this is the idol which, if Nebuchadnezor the king has not

set up, others who think themselves equally infallible, and would like to be equally powerful, and would be likely to use their power equally wisely and justly, propose to you as that object of worship to which you are to sacrifice the ancient and glorious edifice of the British constitution; the birth-right which you have received from your fathers, and are bound to deliver down unsophisticated and unimpaired to your descendants. But I digress: annual or triennial parliaments then are no more the ancient constitution of our country, than equality practicable or desirable in any country. Is equal representation the ancient constitution of England, Scotland, or Ireland? In the two latter, I believe, it will hardly be contended for. How stands the case in England? As to counties; in the reign of Henry the Sixth, when taking advantage of the troubles and confusion of the times, we all know Jack Cade set up the standard of equality, it was judged necessary by the parliament to confine the right of voting to freeholders of forty shillings a year, which sum then was equal to forty pounds per annum now. Whether the parliament then acted wisely and justly, or otherwise, I argue not. From that time forty shillings per annum value to his freehold has been requisite to give a freeholder a right to vote for a representative of a county. Would any rational man or friend to his country wish to exchange our present constitution for that which existed in the reigns previous to Henry VI.? If he would, I wish him joy of his taste and judgment, but cannot agree with either, nor think that many well educated or well informed Englishmen will. But if any object to the statute of Henry the Sixth as curtailing the rights of Englishmen, I beg them to observe the effect of it now. Do they wish freeholders of less than forty shillings a year to have a right of voting, and if they do not, have they any reason or right now to complain of a deviation from the constitution of our ancestors in this respect? Next for cities; had they ever a preferable, had they ever a more equal right of voting than now? Is Westminster complained of as not having a sufficiently numerous right? Or Bristol, Glocester, Hereford, Worcester, or any other cities, as having been disfranchised of any of their ancient rights? I believe not. Observe, I am not now considering what their rights ought to be, but what they have been.

Lastly for boroughs; it is mightily the fashion to assert that the small boroughs which now send members to parliament, were formerly large and considerable places. This may possibly have been the case in a few instances, but in most I am sure it is not so. Then let it be remembered that representatives have been given to the counties of Wales, and to some boroughs there also, I believe, on popular grounds, and to other counties which in old times had not representatives. Let any man only look at the upwards of twenty

boroughs in Cornwall, which are now represented in the House of Commons, and determine whether most of them have ever been large places. There were many small boroughs in the reigns of Elizabeth and James the First, which by petition obtained to be disfranchised; but the reason of this was, not so often on account of their being reduced in consequence from what they had been, as owing to the increased burthen of paying their representatives, occasioned by the augmented value of money, and more frequent and longer sitting of parliaments, and to their really being small and inconsiderable places, as most of them had always been. I will not waste words. An argument that the representation of the House of Commons was ever formed on principles of equality, and that such was the ancient and original constitution of England, Scotland, or Ireland, cannot be advanced but to the most ignorant, to whom the most palpable contradictions of historic truth must be unknown, to be such; yet these are the multitude, the populace, to whom our reforming demagogues speechify, and whom, by false reasonings and statements, plausible to their knowledge or rather ignorance of real facts and true theory, they incite to the wild cry of—give us our rights—without that multitude having one true idea of what their rights are, have been, or ought to be. Will you have no taxes? None, doubtless is the vociferated reply. Will you have no war? Tired and pinched by one of long duration, they will probably answer also—none: though a period would probably soon arrive when they might reverse their cry in this respect. Most wars have been at first popular, but I remember no peace that has been so. Will you have equal representation in parliament? How can the multitude exclaim otherwise than aye?—especially when equality of representation naturally leads to an attempt at equality of every thing else, and thus hopes are instilled into their minds of being all gentlemen, or rather perhaps, for their knowledge of the world after all is more than compatible with such an idea, that there should be no gentlemen at all; and the step is easy from these notions—vide France—to the general destruction of such useless beings. But we are told equal representation is not the desire of parliamentary reformers. Annual parliaments have been publicly avowed to be their object, and those who are not for it, stigmatized as deserters of the cause.

A friend to annual parliaments, must be a friend to equal representation; they are so congenial, so alike founded on the want either of principle or consideration: besides, when did it ever happen that success in really democratical systems did not end in the success of the most violent? I contend, therefore, two things on the premises: first, that the object of the most eager and therefore leading reformers of parliament is general suffrage or equal repre-

sentation, as well as annual parliaments; secondly, that there is no other system on which a radical reform of parliament or change of representation can be effected, and a radical reform (though by some who are frightened at the shadow of their own castle in the air, tempered by the word moderate,) is obviously aimed at.

Upon no other system but equal representation, or something very near it, can there be an agreement of parliamentary reformers themselves; and therefore upon this system, those who persevere must ultimately unite and stand, so long as such unstable soil will bear them: I have said what the result must be; I have, I think, proved what the result must be.—I call upon all well-educated and considerate persons to reflect, whether, upon the principle of right reason or sound experience, any other than that which, without the slightest gift of prophecy, I have foretold, can be the result. Britons of less information I earnestly entreat to study the History of the French revolution, and to learn from thence what the result must be. Shall this French revolution always be dinned in our ears? may exclaim the equalizing reformer.—Yes, so long as it is right to warn a country of its danger, as I now warn my country. But the French revolution constitutes not the bulk of my argument; it is only an instance of its truth. It is therefore neither wise in theory to exchange our existing happy constitution for a deceitful and destructive, because misguiding phantom, nor in doing so shall we in any degree be returning to ancient established usages, but quite the reverse.

If I have proved the truth of these propositions, I have done away all ground for radical parliamentary reform, or any fundamental change in the representation of the Commons of this land. I have also shown the extreme danger and mischief likely, nay certain, to arise from such a measure. Am I contending that there is theoretic perfection in the present system of representation? This I cannot be doing, because I readily acknowledge I have no idea of such theoretic perfection.

Is there any such attached to the idea of equal representation? With the known imperfection and frailty of man's will, and the admitted impossibility of a whole people governing in a large state, equal representation has no other perfection in it, theoretical or practical, than that of approaching, as nearly as possible, to absolute democracy, or the government of the whole people by the whole people, that is, to the worst species of government, or rather to no government at all. I have stated what I conceive to be the best government—that which is most calculated to produce good of every kind—virtue, happiness, freedom,—and that the best government can only be produced by contrivance, interesting the feelings, the passions, the personal desires and objects of the governors, of

those entrusted with power to promote these public blessings; and further that a government ever so wisely contrived, for the most part requires time, habit, and attachment, with experience of its beneficial effects, in order to perfect and establish it. The present state of representation has been long established; let us examine it with a view to its tendency of producing good or otherwise. The share of blessings we actually enjoy under it, I first recommend to serious notice and consideration, and after fair examination of what the amount of those blessings may be, I advise an impartial comparison of that amount with the political state of other nations. If that amount is considerable, if it weighs heavy in the scale against the advantages enjoyed by other nations, it argues forcibly in favour of our present state. Then I beg my countrymen to reflect whether or not every description, or nearly every description of persons do not find in the House of Commons, constituted as it is, some representatives inclined and interested, necessarily inclined and interested, to stand up for their interests and to protect them from oppression. Is there not a great strength of landed interest, a great strength of commercial interest? are there not soldiers, sailors, lawyers? Even learning has its representatives, in the members for the universities; and what interests have not their representatives?—The national attachment to the established Church, supported by the bishops in the House of Lords, forms a sufficient representation for the clergy. Presbyterians and other dissenters have their friends, many of them persons of their own persuasion, in the House of Commons. I have elsewhere ventured to argue with sincerity, that the admission of a few Roman Catholics would, on this principle of general not equal representation, benefit not endanger our constitution. Roman Catholics, however, and Quakers, the only Christians that I know by means of their religion excluded from sitting in Parliament, have their representatives there; and what Briton or Irishman has not?

Is there great influence of the crown in the House of Commons? is it not useful sometimes in curbing the otherwise too great power of the aristocracy or democracy? Is there an aristocratical influence of considerable strength? has not the advantage of this interest been often felt in keeping within due bounds both the prerogative of the prince and the licentiousness of the people, and checking too much power in either, whether within the walls of the House of Commons or elsewhere?

Is there not also a very strong popular or democratical weight in the House of Commons representing the people of the country as it now does? and is not this last weight, backed by the support of the people without doors, fully sufficient to preserve them from oppression and secure their rights? and is it not often supported

in doing so by the crown against the aristocracy, and by the aristocracy against the crown? Stood the powers of these two last named authorities in the state on equally strong ground with the popular branch, it might be safe that that branch should be wholly popular; but they do not—they cannot:—they can only be preserved by a mixture of royal and aristocratical weight with the popular in the House of Commons; this the dêmagogues well know, and therefore wish to inveigle the House of Commons to insist on being entirely popular, in which case she must first sweep away the other two branches of the legislature, and then destroy herself; as she did in the unfortunate reign of Charles the First, when by persecuting and excluding every member that would not submit to be governed by popular fury, the House of Commons rendered themselves the representatives of popular passions, and the tools of those demagogues who, while their short reign lasts, ever must

"Wield at will the fierce Democraty,"

such as an equal representation of the people, chosen by universal suffrage, must necessarily be. The balance of the constitution is really in the House of Commons; you may talk of king, lords, and Commons, as much as you please, but destroy the balance of the three powers in the Commons House of Parliament, and they exist no more—the constitution is at an end. It was not always so, because at some periods the crown, at others the nobles, had the power respectively in their own hands; but it is so now, and has been so ever since the reign of Charles the First—ever since the Commons have been no longer vassals, and the government really a free one. If I am right in my view of the subject (and I dare any man to prove I am not, the fact is so obvious), will you exchange this happy balance, producing the substantial blessings we enjoy—freedom, and the protection of the laws—for the airy vision of equal representation? If ye will do so, my countrymen, ye are worse than madmen; but I know you have too much wisdom and integrity to act thus, and, trusting to that conviction, I proceed with coolness and consideration to some further observations.

Upon the question whether in point of fact the House of Commons, as now constituted, and the parliament altogether, do or do not upon the whole attend to the interests of the people, I have herein before suggested some topics; I shall take the liberty of adding a few more, which particularly affect the House of Commons. However strong or powerful the influence of the crown, or of the minister in that house, could that influence in the last session of Parliament prevent the repeal, or rather effect the renewal of the property tax?—While it must be admitted to me that

it could not, because it endeavoured to do it and failed in such endeavour, it may be said—but in this instance the interest of the House of Commons and its constituents were the same. However, this argument or rather fact may detract from the merit of perfect disinterestedness in the members of the House of Commons, it certainly tends to substantiate my doctrine, that that assembly is now, and in the present state of the representation of the people, so constructed that when their real and essential interests are at stake, it will support and promote them, although, from other influences operating upon it, and from some degree of independence on the people, it will often not succumb to mere arbitrary and unreasonable will on their part, as for instance, in laying or retaining an useful tax. I am not trumpeting the perfection of those who compose the House of Commons any more than of those who compose the other branches of the legislature; much integrity, much wisdom, much knowledge, are doubtless to be found in king, lords, and commons; but they are all men, and therefore not morally, however politically, perfect: yet if, as I contend (and I repeat my appeal to experience) they are altogether, and the House of Commons, that most powerful branch of the legislature in particular, so constituted as to be most likely to seek the good of the governed, what can, or at least what ought the governed or people to desire more? Many a man has pulled down an old house in order to build a new one, some wisely and some otherwise; but certainly insane must that man be pronounced, who, for the sake of erecting a new house, would destroy his old one, if known and acknowledged to be the best in Christendom. Let us reason so, and preserve the best actual constitution in Christendom, and not tamper with it first, and pull it down in the end.

Am I an enemy to real reform of parliament, or to any measure which is evidently calculated to cure or remove a positive public evil without danger of producing greater? I hope I am not; I am sure the House of Commons has manifested its disposition not to be so on many occasions, particularly by the disfranchisement and change of constitution in several boroughs, in consequence of actual and legally proved venality, and also by the many and severe laws it has originated and passed against bribery at elections. The first system (I appeal to facts and the statute book), was gradually working its way to good, when the sweeping alarm of a radical change in the representation, and the obvious tendency it had to universal suffrage and the ruin of the constitution, checked this beneficial system in its infancy, and prevented it from being brought to maturity. I myself, individually, have ever been a friend to the principle, not of disfranchising out-voters, there is no reason for it, and it would be injustice, but of prohibiting strictly the paying the ex-

penses of out-voters from the place of their residence to the place of election. I have more than once voted in parliament for a bill to this effect, and strictly on the grounds I have laid down, as the only rational, the only legitimate, the only just, the only real grounds of reforming parliament, or reforming any thing else, namely the curing or removing a practical evil, without danger of thereby producing greater. As I have mentioned this my opinion respecting out-voters, I beg to make myself clearly understood; I think the allowing candidates to pay the expenses of bringing down out-voters is a positive evil, because for the most part such out-voters will vote for whichever candidate will be at the expense of bringing them down; and if both or all the candidates are willing to do so, that such voters nine times out of ten give their votes on no good principle whatever, and that the bringing them down commonly increases the expense of the elections, often ruins the candidates, and not unfrequently prevents proper persons from standing or offering themselves to be elected: then I cannot see any danger of greater evils from prohibiting this expense. A great additional good will be often done by preventing drunkenness, debauchery, and riot, and an out-voter, as it appears to me, will have no cause to complain, if for his own advantage or convenience, living from the place with respect to which he enjoys the elective franchise, he is not permitted to be brought to vote at that place at any other expense than his own. It must be obvious that my reasoning does not apply to voters for counties or other places, residing within the county or other place for which they have votes, though at a distance from the county town or place of polling.

Perhaps the not adopting the system I have been writing in favour of with regard to out-voters, as well as the ceasing to punish gross venality in electors as heretofore by disfranchisement is owing to the well-founded alarm of danger to the constitution from notions publicly held and recommended, of a radical change in the representation. Real reforms are often prevented by the danger arising from the promotion of those which are imaginary; and this is one additional and serious objection to the conduct and system of those who are distinguished by the name of Parliamentary Reformers.

I have, I trust, shown that neither equality nor regularity in the representation of the people of England, which representation forms so great a majority of the Commons House of the United Kingdom, has ever prevailed. The principles on which the successive Unions of Scotland and Ireland with England have been effected, are in themselves proofs that equality or regularity were not the system of British representation; for Ireland, with nearly half as many millions of inhabitants as Great Britain, has only

one hundred members or representatives; and Scotland, out of proportion to the comparative extent of her population, has only forty-five; while England retains her former number, including Wales, of upwards of five hundred. Indeed no person at the period of these unions being passed into laws by the respective legislatures, conceived they were founded on equality of numbers or population.

The House of Commons of Ireland, it is well known, was more unequal and irregular than that of England; a practical reform was however incidentally and without adopting any dangerous principle effected in the Irish representation at the period of the Irish Union, by striking off, for the most part, the smaller and closer boroughs, and retaining only, in the lessened representation to the united parliament, the counties and larger and most considerable cities and towns. It was obvious that no democratical danger could arise from adopting this system on this occasion, the whole representation of Ireland being fixed at so small a comparative number. The persons interested in the smaller Boroughs received remuneration from the public for the deterioration in value to their property, from the loss of their former franchises; and as these smaller Boroughs were generally under the influence of Protestants, and Catholics have the elective franchise in Ireland, some weight was thrown into a scale, which (when once the danger of that scale preponderating was done away by the Union,) was greatly in want of it for its own protection.

Of Scotland we know the representation in the United Parliament reduced to the proportion stated, was formed on the old principles and scale of the Scottish constitution and representation, both which were the reverse of popular; but the Presbyterian Church, which is professed by the bulk of Scotchmen, being the established Church of that part of the United Kingdom, and none in danger of oppression in consequence of, or any way in relation to their religion, there was not the same reason as in Ireland for leaning to the popular side in the arrangements arising out of the union of Scotland with England; neither from its existing constitution was it perhaps practicable, without unnecessary and probably unjust and dangerous changes, to have thrown more weight into the popular scale in Scotland by means of her union.

Thus were these two great political measures carried practically, justly, and wisely, on the true principles of the British constitution, the promoters of them neither fearing to change, where a certain and practical good was the object, nor changing more than was requisite, and doing no injustice to individuals or bodies of men; and moreover steadily and carefully looking to and preserving the main system of virtual and not actual representation of the mass of the

people. What I mean by virtual representation I have stated—the people's being represented by a body of men from the constitution of that body strongly inclined and almost necessarily impelled to act for the good of the people; which good in this kingdom requires (I speak of the real good of the people at large,) that their representatives should be also strongly inclined and impelled to respect the constitutional rights, and to preserve the constitutional weight of the other two branches of the legislature.

This is the true constitutional system of representation on which Britain has flourished, and while she continues to preserve it unimpaired, will still continue to flourish and be free. I would have the revolutionary reformers know from me, if they do not understand it already from the principles I have laid down, that I am not such an idiot as to agree with an unfortunate orator, just within the reach of my earliest political memory, whose name I will not record to ridicule, who in the parliamentary disputes about taxation and representation in the commencement of the American contest, insisted in the House of Commons, that the continent of North America was virtually represented in the British parliament, because each colony was feudally held by grant of his Majesty's manor of East Greenwich, and East Greenwich was in the county of Kent represented by two knights in parliament! Such nonsense makes one almost as sick as the contrary and still more mischievous nonsense of equality and equal representation. But the orator's nonsense was mischievous; not by persuading any man of the truth of his ridiculous proposition, but by its tendency to cast a slur over the foundation of British freedom—virtual representation.

The American colonies were not virtually represented in the British parliament; nay, more, if I may be allowed the expression, they were virtually unrepresented. I will explain what I mean: virtual representation consisting in the circumstance of the representatives being from their respective situations inclined and impelled to promote the good of their general constituents, the people at large, a country may, I think, be truly said to be virtually unrepresented, that is to be the reverse of represented, by a body of men who from their situation and constitution are necessarily inclined and impelled to promote the oppression of such country. Now as to a body of men who tax themselves and their immediate constituents, those who send them to parliament, and those who live near and around them, just so much less in proportion as they tax more heavily others, with whom they have no immediate connection, and who live at an immense distance, with almost as wide a gulph between them, as that between Lazarus in Abraham's bosom and the spirit of the rich man deceased; by such body of

men, I contend such distant country may be said to be virtually unrepresented: and this was the case between the parliament of Great Britain and the heretofore British colonies in America. It is far from my wish unnecessarily to revive the memory of the unfortunate and fatal contest I have been alluding to; though perhaps it might be well for all British politicians, even of the present day, to consider it maturely, with all its bearing, in their closets. I only quote it to illustrate what virtual representation truly is. It is the reverse of any connection which heretofore subsisted between the now American States and the British Parliament, but precisely what long has subsisted between Englishmen and their parliaments, and now subsists between the whole people of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and their Imperial Parliament. One word more, and I have done with the late contest between Great Britain and her colonies, and the merits of it.

I desire to be considered as having given no opinion whatever on these merits further than I have expressly stated an opinion. The Constitution of Great Britain, by the magic touch of Virtual Representation admirably calculated for the good government of the Country, beneficially subjected to her Parliament by being virtually represented in it, became the clumsiest and most unwieldy of machines when applied to distant Colonies, or even to nearer countries not so represented in her Parliament; and hence the necessity, the excellent policy and patriotic integrity and wisdom of effecting and consolidating an Union between Great Britain and Ireland; and hence the great difficulty of heretofore adopting any rational policy with regard to our North American Colonies, being so distant, and otherwise so differently circumstanced from Ireland. Hence also considerable excuse for the conduct of many of our Administrations towards those Colonies, and for the apparent unreasonableness both on the part of Britain and America during the unhappy contest which took place between them. For some years we have been two nations, and I am sorry to say hostile nations, contrary, I am convinced, to the true interest of both; but while Great Britain despises America, America will hate Great Britain, and the nations must, unhappily for both, continue hostile. It is worthy, however, of a patriotic and philanthropic mind to strive to remove the evil, which is serious to both countries.

For this episode I hope I shall be excused, arising so naturally as it has done out of my subject. I have all along argued that the Parliament of England, afterwards swelled into the Parliament of Great Britain, and lastly into that of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, has for a long period of time attended

upon the whole to the interests of the people and of the country.

If this my proposition be not true in the main, then I am aware and admit that my other proposition built upon it cannot be established; namely, that the House of Commons, as now constructed, is a virtual representation of the people. But recur to the History of England. Since the happy amendments and re-establishment of our Constitution in 1688, my assertion stands on the strongest ground, remembering that I say in the main and upon the whole, not contending that Parliaments have at any period been entirely free from the operations of human error or passion, from which no equalizing or other better system invented by man can entirely preserve men. But even before we enjoyed the advantages resulting from our necessary, wise and glorious Revolution, it should be recollected how the very Parliament of Charles the Second, to which I as well as Bishop Burnet have alluded with disapprobation, which was continued to the enormous length of eighteen years, and which was stigmatized by the name of the Pensioned Parliament, acted during the latter periods of its existence. When the measures of the King's Administration appeared seriously destructive of the true interests of the country, this very Parliament manfully opposed the ruinous system attempted to be imposed upon them. The conduct even of this Parliament then contributes to substantiate the principle which I contend for, that Parliaments are to be depended upon in the main: surely since the Revolution they have been our best ground of dependance.

If in our own times, out of such a magnitude and multiplicity of dangers as the human mind cannot look back upon without dread and horror, Parliament has at length, however some considerable difficulties remain to be encountered, placed us in a state of freedom, power, and honour: is it rational, is it just to assert that our good has not been the object, and in part the successful object of King, Lords, and Commons? and if of the House of Commons, then does not that House prove itself a Virtual Representation of the People?

I verily believe the House of Lords has, in like manner and on the same principles (for there is Royal and Popular as well as Aristocratical influence in this House also) aimed at the public good, and that King, Lords, and Commons have struggled for us, and have preserved us; in saying which, while I attribute perfection of conduct to neither party in either House, I attribute their due merit to both parties, to Oppositions and to Administrations for the time being. The Government of France, whether old or new, legitimate or usurped, never can understand the state of parties in England; and to England itself, though probably sometimes good, mischief has not unfrequently accrued from the blunders and

mistakes of France in this respect; for instance, by her persevering in War, when she would otherwise have acceded to a reasonable Peace, or by her making some particular attack, which, though unsuccessful in its main object, produces mischief to Great Britain; both which evils might possibly have been avoided had she understood that the great majority of both parties in Parliament, however strong in their parliamentary language against each other, agreed in being attached to the established Constitution and real interests of their country. Foreigners in general, but more particularly the French, have no idea of the cordiality with which many of the Members and Friends of Administration shake hands with those of Opposition after a long and violent debate in either House, or of the respect for the most part entertained by the leading Members of both parties for each other, or of the private friendships and connexions mutually subsisting between individuals of the two bodies. They have each their party and their public objects. As to the first they are decidedly hostile, and frequently as to the last, but frequently not, and they often feel and allow the patriotic views of their opponents—although of the opposite party, they mutually mark and stigmatize every real or apparent fault; from which the public derives the advantage of being able to detect both error and fault, than which nothing can be a much greater check to their being either or both of them essentially committed or obstinately persevered in; and herein we find another practical good of our existing Constitution, for it must be observed that the advantages just pointed out for the most part are connected with, and in great measure result from a total want of any desire or aim either to destroy the Constitution or ruin an opponent or adversary; and these happy dispositions arise from a real attachment to the Constitution, from habit, and from the improbability, so long as the equalizing system and all approach to it are avoided, of either party or any individual being able to gratify any such vicious or malicious objects.

That this improbability, as stated, actually exists, I appeal to experience, and that it is both a proof of the happy practical state of our country as to government, and the natural good result of such a state, I appeal to the understanding of my Readers.

In praising therefore the parental care and exertions of our Parliaments through the tremendous struggles we have undergone, I keep to my text of not praising or blaming, defending or condemning any particular administration or set of men, and am celebrating only by allusions to some happy causes and effects inherent in it, while it is suffered to rest upon its old principles and foundation, the real and practical merits of the Government and Constitution of our country—of its Parliament,—and most particularly of the House of Commons, against the supposed defects and ill construction of which the thundering shot of levelling eloquence

is principally and systematically directed. The House of Commons, however, (constructed as it is) is like a strong and well-fortified fort, powerfully garrisoned; and for one I thank God this is so, convinced that the real good of my country rests on its defence. But we must not consider it as invulnerable or impregnable; nor, while the trumpets of the besiegers sound so loud and so near, desert our respective posts in that defence; else the enemy may storm it, and then adieu to the British Constitution, which, instead of being a system of universal suffrage or equal representation, I trust, I have shown to be radically founded, so that it cannot exist otherwise than on the reverse principle, that is, Virtual Representation, which actually prevails in the present construction of the House of Commons. Is there an insuperable objection to a few boroughs having an excessive small number of voters each, so that one or two individuals can return the members, by virtue of their local landed property, as in some large cities other individuals can do by virtue of their commercial riches and power? A landed man probably is sent to parliament in one case, a commercial man in the other, and in the House of Commons they are jointly assimilated into the virtual representation of the people, and (if I am right in the principles I have supported from reason and experience, to which I earnestly beg attention in the preceding pages) both unite in promoting, upon the whole, the good of their country. If, however, the existence of such boroughs, after all that can be said in their excuse, hurt the eye or feeling of theorists, so that they cannot endure them, whenever a *radical* change in the representation is *radically* given up, let the public, as in the case of the Irish Union, pay the proprietors for the loss certainly of some actually possessed influence secured to them by ancient usage (and the common law of the land, on which our dearest rights depend, is nothing else,) and disfranchise such boroughs. But while the besiegers sound to arms, we must defend the citadel, and not parley upon terms.

One evil of the mad parliamentary reforming cry, as I have already observed, is that otherwise attainable reforms cannot be persevered in or adopted. How strongly is this truth now exemplified? For what can more tend to put a stop to and prevent those wise and constitutional, while safe and practicable reductions of our military establishment, and other economical reforms now actually taking place with a rational and patriotic view to relieve the public distress and diminish the crown's influence, than the wild cries of, 'Give us our rights, destroy the present House of Commons, and establish annual parliaments and universal suffrage,' which it must be admitted have now been audibly and distinctly made, and especially as those cries have been accompanied with actual sedition and riot, and a pretty evident, though

hitherto unsuccessful attempt at insurrection and rebellion. However pressing our financial difficulties, however desirable safe and practical economy and reductions may be, we cannot justify presenting to the knife of public assassins, our wives and children to be butchered, or to their desperation our property, that which is to comfort and maintain our families, to be forcibly taken from us or destroyed. Military force is alone able to resist such attempts, and military force we must retain, if revolutionary reformers threaten us. I write with a melancholy feeling on this subject; for I had indulged the hope that a very small military force would now suffice us, and that great additional reductions of public expense, and the influence of the crown, on true constitutional principles might have been effected, an unavoidable check to which I now fear. However well poised the respective powers of the House of Commons may be upon the whole for the preservation of the Constitution, it is impossible, consistently with the state of earthly things, but that one power will be continually gaining on the others; and the crown by the constitution concentrating in itself the whole executive authority of the state, must almost necessarily be, particularly during a long and arduous war, the increasing weight. It is in such case the House of Commons requires to be made to re-approach to its first principles of virtual not equal representation of the people, and of due poise of royal, aristocratical, and popular weight. With this wise, just, and constitutional view, whose bill was it that did more than any act of late years to diminish the then overgrown influence of the Crown, as it had been voted to be by an House of Commons constituted as the present? Was Mr. Burke a friend to parliamentary reform? No—its most decided enemy, on the same principles on which I am, in this respect, sincerely proud of being his disciple. Perhaps afterwards this great orator and honest statesman, without being perfect either as an orator or statesman, suffered himself to be so confounded by the mischiefs and jargon of the French revolution, as almost to become an enemy to rational and constitutional reform—and we have seen many other instances of a similar kind. These mad notions, therefore, if they do not overturn the state to its foundation, by poisoning the source of reform, gradually sap that foundation, which is the next greatest evil that can be inflicted on a country. For one, I have no hesitation to say, that the wild pranks of these mountebank reformers tempt me into a much greater disposition to submit to actual corruptions than has heretofore been, or would naturally have been my case. I may, like Mr. Burke, or any other greater man than myself, carry this too far; in difficult cases it is not easy to hit an exact medium between right and wrong; but this I am sure of, it is the height of folly for a

man, because he is a Whig in political principles, therefore to give encouragement to what is at this period styled Parliamentary Reform, and positively wrong for one who sees so strongly as I do the certain mischief of a radical change in the Representation, or of shaking the principles on which the advantages of the present Representation rest, to encourage or widen the breach between constitutional Whigs and constitutional Tories—such as professing themselves of or inclined to be attached to either of those parties, impartially, honestly, and sincerely wish to preserve the Constitution in church and state, and heartily, with their whole souls, detest and abhor the innovating system of levellers. The union of such patriotic persons just now, is become, in my opinion, most desirable, if not absolutely necessary, in order to guard against the danger of projected innovation, and to preserve the Constitution of their ancestors, as they joined in doing at the Revolution, though they differed somewhat afterwards in the modes of proceeding to be subsequently adopted.—When we are safe we may differ again about smaller concerns; but while the constitution itself is in danger from manifest internal enemies, let us not differ or encourage differences about comparatively trifling concerns, but heartily join in defending and preserving so great and transcendent a blessing; in order to effect which most desirable public good two useful means impress themselves upon my mind—first, that the leaders of the Whig and Tory parties (if I may be allowed to call them by their old names,) dismissing for a time at least the memory of smaller contests, should unite and form an administration strong enough and wise enough to protect our calumniated and threatened Constitution, as well as to alleviate the difficulties of a distressed population. The other useful step, in order to effect this most desirable public benefit, seems to me to be (to use a vulgar but strong expression) not to blink the question of Parliamentary Reform, but to assert the practical, constitutional, safe, and beneficial principle of old usage and virtual representation, in a public and parliamentary way, agreeably to precedent, by a Declaratory Act, declaring, enacting, and establishing that principle, and condemning and excluding its reverse, the pernicious theoretical nonsense of equal representation and universal suffrage.—For this purpose I subjoin a very short but clear and explicit suggested bill, which, or one to the same effect, better drawn, I shall be happy to see submitted to the wisdom and consideration of Parliament.

PROPOSED BILL.

WHEREAS much error has arisen amongst persons ignorant of history, and ill informed as to the practice and principles of the

inestimable constitution of this united kingdom, so far as relates to the representation of the people thereof in parliament: And WHEREAS unreasonable and dangerous doubts, misconceptions, and discontents have been occasioned thereby; *May it please your Majesty*, that it may be declared and enacted, and be it declared and enacted by the king's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same,—That the representation of the people of England, Scotland, and Ireland separately, or united as they now happily are by law into one United Kingdom, never has been equal, nor their representatives elected by universal suffrage; but that the said representation as it now stands, has in fact arisen from old established usages and casual grants of franchises amended, corrected, and improved by various statutes, and constitutes on the whole a virtual representation of the people of this land, congenial to the mixed principles of the excellent practical Constitution of this United Kingdom, and conducive to the preservation of the rights of the people thereof, and to their general liberty and happiness; and that any attempt radically or essentially to change or alter the present Representation of the people in the Commons house of Parliament, under whatever specious pretence, tends to exchange that liberty and happiness, founded in the Constitution of Government, which, under Providence, has resulted from the wisdom and been purchased by the blood of our ancestors, and is deservedly the admiration of the Christian world, —for the anarchy, misery, bloodshed, and despotism, which have of late years unhappily been prevalent in the neighbouring kingdom of France.

CONCLUSION.

EGOTISM should be avoided; but in a publication of political principles, and in an earnest endeavour to guard fellow subjects and countrymen against a most alarming public danger, it may surely be admitted, without any just imputation of that fault, for a man desirous to satisfy persons with whom he may have public connexions, or to whom the explanation of his public conduct may appear proper, so far to speak of himself as to elucidate that conduct, especially if he can show, or has shown, that such conduct is the necessary result of the decided principles he avows to act upon. Strongly impressed, as I have manifested myself, with the danger of any radical innovation in respect to the actual pre-

sent construction of the House of Commons, should I have acted agreeably to public duty, had I, in the present state of things, suppressed those sentiments? Still more forcibly may I ask, should I be acting agreeably to public duty, if my political conduct should be otherwise than in unison with those sentiments, founded, as I have declared and shown them to be, on the strongest conviction and principle? On these questions, and on this statement, I feel myself entitled to call upon all those whom it may concern, particularly on such as bear friendly dispositions towards me, and have heretofore honoured me with their good opinion and confidence, not to be offended with me, or to change those friendly dispositions, or to withdraw that good opinion and confidence, because I cannot sacrifice fundamental public principle to local or party politics. If ever there was a sincere Whig, I am one; I have sacrificed many worldly views, and I am ready to make much greater sacrifices to acting according to the best of my judgment on Whig principles. But I cannot, and will not sacrifice those principles themselves to the gratification, to the local prejudices, or even to the honest and deliberately-formed opinions of any man or set of men; not even of those whom from gratitude, attachment, and regard, I most wish to oblige, and most wish to agree with in sentiment. Such I explicitly declare to them, as I have before done, to be the ground I act upon in public matters, and in private too; on which I always have acted, and on which, while my understanding remains, I always will act.

Fiat justitia, ruat Cœlum.

Consistent with principles, I trust no man will be found more anxious to oblige, to serve, and to agree in opinion with his friends than I am. Some of those friends, and other honourable characters, are favourable to what they consider as moderate Parliamentary Reform; to such respectable persons I wish to explain (because I am anxious not to be misunderstood by them) certain words of mine in the foregoing sheets. Alluding to some coarse language of the violent against the more moderate advocates for Parliamentary Reform, I have used these words—"In this opinion I cannot wholly disagree with these more violent Reformers," and shortly given reasons why I could not. I have more than once declared, and repeat my unchanged opinion, that many of the friends in different degrees to the measure I deprecate, sincerely mean thereby good to their country. I certainly do think, as I have endeavoured to prove, that in judgment they are sadly erroneous, and that their conduct endangers the very Constitution they wish to improve; which conduct, therefore, I cannot believe or denominate wise. To express and prove the truth of which

opinion of mine, not to impute bad intentions to those whose intentions I admit to be good, is all that I meant by the passage I have been referring to, besides observing on the coarse treatment the moderate have experienced from their more violent brethren, because they would not go all lengths with them, and suggesting, that some they do not suspect may have bad intentions.

For the reasons I have given, I do conscientiously think it is dangerous and wrong at this time to exasperate the differences between constitutional Whigs and Tories, who on no point, I believe, more agree than on that which I have been discussing; in doing which I hope seriously to have drawn the attention of both the above descriptions of friends to their country to the consideration of what I have on good grounds, I trust, much insisted on—not only that an essential change in the present state of the Representation is practically most dangerous, but also (and pointedly) that the project of it is founded on a system neither agreeable to the practice nor theory of our Constitution. I dwell so much on this part of my subject, because from observation I am inclined to think, many, who entirely agree with me in the practical danger of the suggested measure of Parliamentary Reform, are not so strongly impressed as I have proved myself to be, and I hope I shall have induced others to be, with a serious conviction of mind, that it rests wholly on a foundation inconsistent with and contrary to the principles of the so much famed British Constitution.

We have talked much of what the French have done during the prevalence of their late Revolution, and pending their multiplied unsuccessful and ineffectual attempts *to erect a free constitution in a moment, on almost wholly popular grounds.* Their repeated failure ought certainly to make its due impression upon us. But it is further worthy to be remarked in this respect, that any person who will take the trouble of considering and comparing their different plans, must perceive, notwithstanding their broad basis of sovereign will of the people, the French constitution-mongers have continually, and I believe invariably, found themselves compelled to introduce into their respective plans some check to that sovereign will. It is the preservation of those tried and mildly working constitutional checks, which by the blessing of Providence and wisdom of our ancestors, actually prevail in the popular branch of our Legislature, and thence diffuse themselves into the vitals of our happily-constructed political system, and which so effectually and beneficially counteract the wild working of this sovereign will, that I so earnestly contend for, knowing that all depends on their preservation.

Consider now, what the French have done, since the setting of their revolutionary comet. By the destruction of all the little

principle that subsisted in their ancient government, obliged to build on new foundations, called on to establish a free monarchy, they are necessarily driven to a popular system of representation, and rightly also, so far as is requisite to secure protection and good government to the people at large; but they obviously feel the equal necessity of powerfully checking and tempering in the representation of the people, this popular system, which they rightly constitute an ingredient in it. This is done by primary assemblies electing secondary; and secondary others, till they arrive at their ultimate and intended virtual representation of the people; into which, in order to render it truly so, they have judged it requisite to introduce, through means which will be observed by inspection and consideration of their plan, further temperaments of royal and aristocratical influence. And this, it is to be remembered, they have done, while they have attempted to have a monarch on the throne, and an aristocratical third branch of the legislature, with respectively great powers. Is it not obvious then, either that they copy in the popular branch of their legislature, as far as can be done in a new institution, the principles, not of the hopeful projects of our parliamentary reformers, but of our actually existing and long-established state of virtual representation? (which if done, they manifest a strong approbation of our present system), or else (which is equally manifesting such strong approbation), that they are driven by plain reason and experience, without intending it, to imitate such our system?

Thus we perceive now, formed by the French on the principles of our tried Constitution, precisely where it differs from the over-popular and equalizing system of representation, a constitution which, like its many predecessors, may stand perhaps only a trial of the day. I hope otherwise for their sake, and for the sake of mankind; and I certainly think it more likely to stand in consequence of their wise and patriotic attempt at virtual rather than equal representation, and of their well-judged endeavour rather to check and temper, than pamper and inflame the sovereign will of the people.

To pamper and inflame that will in Great Britain and Ireland is the object of the violent parliamentary reformers. To effect this their unworthy object will be the result, if the more moderate and well-intentioned friends to parliamentary reform, joining the violent, should succeed in procuring a condemnation of the present state of our representation, which God forbid, therefore, should ever happen.

But with regard to the constitution at this moment established in France, it may be said—It is the work of the Ultra-royalists—it is not founded in public principle, or the good of the people—it is

merely an essay to patch up the weak and rotten fabric of their restored monarchy. I am not sufficiently acquainted with facts to discuss the truth of any such assertions, should they be made; but this I know and have stated, and the history of the times will prove, that the revolutionists themselves in France were obliged to have recourse to some expedients of the same kind, and with the same view as the constitutionalists have now done. The weak efforts of these revolutionists to check the dire effects of their own system of sovereign will proved ineffectual. Should French legislators therefore, at the close of so tremendous a revolutionary agitation, after the experience of the failure of so many former constitutions from being too popular, and of the ultimate result of those agitations, the despotism of Napoleon, now that an opportunity is afforded them, proceed somewhat further in the counteracting of sovereign will, and adopt the principle of our happily established state of virtual representation, I am not wise enough to perceive, that on this account they are deserving of censure. On the contrary, in this respect I judge them worthy of the highest praise, provided they do not reduce the popular weight too low, of which I cannot conceive there is much danger, commencing as they have been obliged to do, in something very near universal suffrage. If Frenchmen can at last act so laudably in endeavouring to bless their country with the novelty of a good government, surely Britons will be wise enough to continue to their own country the blessings of her well-poised and long-enjoyed free and beneficial system.

As extremes are very prevalent in this world; so while some may err from too great a feeling of alarm at an apparent danger, others from not sufficiently considering the nature and extent of it, may indulge themselves in a false security, and omit the opportunity of adopting sufficient means of defence against a dreadful impending evil. An immense weight of respectability, pervading almost every party in the state, has unequivocally declared itself against universal suffrage, as absurd, mischievous, and subversive of the Constitution; but the mass of the people are not included in that weight, and no positive principle has yet been attempted to be set up against this *ignis fatuus* which misleads the multitude.

Ought it not also to be remembered, that persons who are never-ceasingly striving for a popular object, have a vast advantage over those who are continually opposing it, especially if that object is the destruction of what exists; for if the promoters of destruction once succeed, their success will probably be complete; as an existing good destroyed can very seldom, indeed, be re-attained; whereas the defenders must always and repeatedly succeed, in order permanently to preserve. Besides, the error into which

many conscientious friends to liberty and good government, who have not considered the subject maturely or deeply, are apt with the best intentions, but with the most ruinous consequences, to fall, is that those two excellent purposes are advanced in proportion to increase of power in the mass of the people; whereas too much power vested in that mass necessarily destroys their own liberty and their own good, to promote which, not the gratification of popular whim or pride is the object of true patriotism. Moreover, the actual advantages arising from the present Representation of the people in Parliament are not like the beauties of a fine picture, which strike the eye at once with pleasure and admiration, nor owing to any distinguishable symmetry in the system, but quite the reverse; for there is no symmetry in it, and its advantages result out of the apparent accidental, but which I should call providential operation of checks, that are obviously discoverable, and not without producing other good effects are constantly operating on the great popular influence which exists, and ought to exist in that state of representation.

These principles, in my opinion, require to be stated, asserted, and established in the public mind, as true, wise, and just, so far as can be done by that weight of respectability which is hostile to universal suffrage, and which I sanguinely hope, on mature consideration, will manifest itself hostile to every system which essentially tends to that miserable extreme. The daring manner in which that extreme is at this time praised, supported, and petitioned for, surely calls for the measure I have suggested of a Declaratory Act, condemning the principles, if principles they can be called, on which it attempts to stand; and asserting those of the existing state of the representation, as amongst its other good qualities vesting sufficient power in, without conferring too much authority on the people. This will establish a rallying point, on which we may defend, and will constitute substantial ground on which we may preserve the good we have and now enjoy. At the same time instead of checking rational and practical reforms it will afford us strength and spirit to suggest them, to consider them, and to carry them into effect, as soon as on trial and due examination it shall appear, that the greater danger of a projected radical and fundamental change of our valuable Constitution is at an end; while, on the contrary, so long as we continue to perceive that Constitution seriously threatened, the measure I recommend will operate as a strong test of the danger, and will unite on a distinct and firm foundation the real friends against the real enemies of our constitution and of our country; which surely the result of the late investigations in Parliament, but just come to my knowledge, or that of the public, prove to be essentially requisite at this awful crisis.

POSTSCRIPT.

For the purpose of better understanding the foregoing sheets, it may perhaps be proper to observe, that though the latter part of my Conclusion was written more recently, most of the preceding, and all the historical part of this publication was in the press in the end of January, or very beginning of February, 1817.

I have used, on one occasion, a short ironical expression, which (the context considered, together with the general tenor of my arguments and principles), I think cannot be misunderstood. I will prevent, however, the most remote possibility of mistake, misrepresentation or sarcasm on this passage (page 348), "to the general destruction of such useless beings," I was ironically meaning thereby *gentlemen*, and alluding to their actual treatment by the vile levellers of France, and to the unjust point of view in which the class of gentlemen has been calumniated, and, if some of our own levellers' threats are to be trusted, will be treated by that still more vile, because more inexcusable description of persons here, if we do not early and effectually counteract, dissipate, and annihilate their infamous intrigues.

Who in this country contribute more than gentlemen (including the nobility and clergy,) to the honest employment and beneficial management of the poor—to their improvement in religion and morals—to their relief in actual distress—or to their comfort and advantages in every way? Who principally maintain the numerous, spacious, and commodious Infirmaries and Hospitals throughout the country for their reception when ill, and for the cure of their diseases, bodily infirmities, and dreadful accidents? Who, according to their means, subscribe more largely to other public charities? Who gratuitously dispense justice among the poor, or stand as mediators between them and those ranks in society immediately above them, which, pressed down by the weight of taxation for their legal maintenance, and continually eye-witnesses of their failings, must otherwise be inclined to act harshly towards them? Who expend in larger proportion towards the support of inferior tradesmen, and ultimately through them of the manufacturer? In short, without absurdly supposing that gentlemen, as such, are perfect, or that all gentlemen are even virtuous and good, is there a body of men in this Island by whom the poor and the industrious gain more, or whose being struck out of the order of society, would be a greater loss and misfortune to such persons?

I should be perfectly satisfied to have these last questions

determined by a jury of twelve paupers, six resident in a country parish where there are gentlemen, and six in such a parish where there are none. It is the stigmatised and acknowledged misfortune of our sister Island, that the bulk of her principal nobility and gentry do not reside within her confines, and complaints are commencing against absentees from Great Britain. I no further enter now into these last stated questions or their causes than to deprecate the condemnation of absentee gentlemen, *connected with a desire to ruin or destroy such as do reside*, and to infer from the condemnation of absentees, that resident gentlemen are the reverse of *useless beings*.

Upon the whole, therefore, how actually injurious to the lower classes and to the country at large, as avowedly to gentlemen themselves, is any mad and wicked cry against this deserving, useful, and most respectable class of the community?

In speaking of the heretofore indefinite duration of Parliaments, as it no way affected my argument, I have not noticed that parliaments were heretofore dissolved by demise of the crown, and still are, with the exception of continuing, or (should there be no parliament in existence on such an event) of the last parliament being revived for six months after such demise, if not previously dissolved by prerogative.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

THE PRESENT STATE OF

PAUPERISM IN ENGLAND,

PARTICULARLY AS IT AFFECTS THE

MORALS AND CHARACTER OF THE LABOURING POOR;

IN

A Letter

TO

T. W. COKE, ESQ., M.P.

ONE OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE POOR LAWS.

BY

THE REV. GEORGE GLOVER, A. M.

RECTOR OF SOUTH REPPS, VICAR OF CROMER, AND
CHAPLAIN TO THE MOST NOBLE THE MARQUIS OF BUCKINGHAM.

LONDON.

1817.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

PRESENT STATE OF

PAUPERISM IN ENGLAND,

&c. &c.

SIR,

Mr. Curwen has brought forward in parliament his important motion on our Poor Laws, and a Committee of Inquiry is now sitting, of which I understand you to be an honourable member. But, Sir, it is not merely in your capacity of a member of that committee that I now venture to address you, but as an individual, beyond any other man in England qualified to bear testimony to many facts, which I shall find it necessary to state, and enabled by your own experience, both in public affairs and in private, to illustrate the truth and value of those principles, upon which the observations I am going to make are founded. That pauperism is a subject at all times of great importance, but that it has of late years risen to the rank of constituting a large branch of our national policy, and that the evils arising out of our present system are rendered every day more and more alarming, are truths upon which I need not dwell: they are universally felt, and therefore universally admitted.

But, Sir, it may be asked, upon what grounds, and with what pretensions to superior wisdom and ingenuity, I thus presume to offer myself to public notice on a question, which has already employed the ablest pens, and exercised the most benevolent minds; which can reckon amongst those who have handled it the names of Malthus and of Clarkson, to say nothing of the Honourable George Rose, and a whole host of similar luminaries; and

upon which a Committee of the House of Commons is now actually employed.

Indeed, Sir, had I been about to propose any new theory of ethics, or any fanciful scheme of legislation; had I been about to set at nought the wisdom of former ages, or to contemplate man in any other light than as reason, and revelation, and experience, all present him to our view, I should have good reason to apologize for such an intrusion; and to distrust that impulse by which I am now urged on. But it is because I think all those, whom I have above mentioned, to have erred in this very point; and that the honourable member, who has brought forward this question in parliament, has shown us, by the prospectus of his plan, that he is himself not free from the same delusion; that, instead of endeavouring to restore us to the path from which we have so far wandered, by carefully investigating the causes of our errors, and inculcating the absolute necessity of tracing our own footsteps backward till we again reach that spot where we originally turned aside, they have employed themselves in broaching doctrines, which have no foundation either in truth or nature, or in new schemes for upholding and feeding a system, which they yet acknowledge to be threatening every day more and more to turn upside down the whole fabric of society, and to render the present proprietors and occupiers of the soil no more than stewards of the poor, and that too as holding an office most wretchedly and miserably paid; that I feel induced to occupy a field which they have so totally deserted.

The first and most painful, as well as alarming feature of our present situation is the degraded and discontented character of our poor: that inroad, which has been made upon our ancient national spirit and independence, and that consequent waste of national industry, which have already divided us into two classes, not of rich and poor, for these are now-a-days relative terms but little understood and often misapplied, but into payers and receivers of parochial aid; which have divested pauperism of all shame and all disgrace, and led the poor to look upon the parish as a ready and always available substitute for their own exertions; which have destroyed every incentive to prudent forecast, and taught fraud and importunity to supply the place of that energy of mind as well

as body, which could once animate them to search and to find employment in one direction when it had failed in another, and inspire them with courage and fortitude to grapple with temporary difficulties and extraordinary pressure by an extraordinary degree of diligence and activity, and by a contented submission to temporary privations; which have rendered necessary all your cruel and impolitic laws of settlement and removal; which are perpetually giving rise to parish squabbles between the overseer and the pauper, to the eternal interference of the magistrate in all the concerns of the poor, and to a multiplicity of petty appeals to the court of quarter session, the legal expenses alone of which are now probably very little short of half a million a year.

Nor must I here omit to notice another branch of this moral degradation: I mean its influence on the female character, and the evils with which that influence is also attended. It is the peculiar glory of Christianity to have assigned to woman her proper place in human society, and to have taught us to consider her, not as the base and abject minister of our lusts, but as the companion and associate of our lives; as the parent, the nurse, and the educator of our offspring; as the participator of our cares as well as of our joys; and, what is of peculiar importance to the poor man, as the manager of his household, and the dispenser of those means of livelihood and subsistence, which his own labours are exerted to provide. This is the rank she now holds amongst us; and surely nothing more need be urged upon the high value, which attaches to the preservation of every virtue connected with it, even when contemplated only with a reference to the internal economy of the State. But, Sir, what is the present state of female virtue amongst the lower classes in this country? Alas! the effects of our system of government are here traced in colours not less striking than in the other sex, to which I have just more particularly alluded. From their very childhood they are trained to a total despair of independent maintenance. Industry flags and becomes torpid; the aids of the parish are looked to through the whole period of life, except a very few years before marriage, and perhaps a short space after it; and, strange and unaccountable as it may appear, a spirit of dress, and pride, and idleness, is originated in the young, most nearly connected with

prostitution itself, and generally ending in it; cherished by a morbid and sickly humanity, peculiar to the age we live in, and which I shall presently have cause to notice; and terminating, in after life, in a total absence of that modesty and retirement, which are the loveliest of all ornaments; and in what is considered a necessary part of good housewifery, dexterity in battling the question of relief with the magistrate and the overseer. Any farther details on this subject may, I hope, be spared. Its minuter features are too visible, too notorious, and too disgusting, to be dwelt upon, and I willingly hasten away from it.

Now, Sir, it is not possible that these evils should stop here, unless some adequate corrective be speedily and effectually applied. The poor man, who feels himself necessarily dependent and humiliated, a beggar every week at the door of his overseer for a pittance grudgingly paid; with limbs that remind him of his strength; with the history of other days yet fresh in his remembrance; and with the phantom of British liberty and independence yet dancing before his eyes, soon learns to lay aside respect and reverence, where neither gratitude nor affection bind him. He determines, that something must necessarily be wrong in a state in which the sethings not only happen, but pervade it as a general system; and is thus gradually prepared to join any scheme of revolution, however wild, upon the conviction, as his homely phrase expresses it, that "he has all to gain and nothing to lose."

This, Sir, is a picture which is not overcharged, frightful as it may be to contemplate. It is a situation pregnant with seeds, which, in such a soil as we have long been preparing for their reception, must burst forth at last and vegetate, and the natural produce of which will ripen, either in an abundant crop of the worst species of anarchy and confusion, or, after a vain and unsuccessful struggle (but it will not take place without one) sink us into the deepest abyss of unredeemed despotism. I know, that there are a few limited exceptions, a few spots of light that relieve this ground of gloom and darkness; and I know also, that Holkham and its neighbourhood, as I shall hereafter have occasion to instance, furnish perhaps the noblest and the most splendid that can anywhere be met with; and if I could here turn aside from a subject so portentous, and from a part of it so big with melancholy

reflections, to indulge the language of praise and admiration, I should be free to do so, without any danger of being chargeable either with flattery or exaggeration. But, Sir, this is no part of the object I have in view; and I therefore proceed briefly to advert to the remedies, which have been, or are now proposed, as the means of exonerating us from this mass of suffering, which now exists, and from the ruin which impends over us.

For the last twenty years we have been told, and very gravely told, by an author, whose industry of research and whose acuteness of reasoning on this argument have procured him distinguished fame, that an excessive population is the cause of a large portion of our suffering: that it is an evil which requires to be arrested in its progress: that early marriages are to be discouraged; and, in short, that if we go on to multiply, the last and only resource that will remain for us is to feed upon each other. Even our rulers themselves seem to have been frightened by the bugbear; and we live in an age, and under a government, which, with millions of acres still entirely uncultivated, has not scrupled to recommend the emigration of its subjects, and to encourage them to abandon their native soil. Alas!

> "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.
> Princes and lords may flourish or may fade,
> A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
> But a bold peasantry, a country's pride,
> When once destroyed, can never be supplied."

In these verses, Sir, is much of sound philosophy, which no ingenious speculations can ever shake. And, independent of the unnatural, the immoral, and the irreligious tendency of any system which would teach us to consider marriage as an evil, and the birth of a child as a misfortune, we may still, even in a political point of view, very safely pronounce it, as far as our own empire is concerned, not only impracticable but needless. We may still safely continue to believe, that population is the best source of public strength, as it is the best criterion of public prosperity; that the promotion and increase of it is the first duty of a wise government; and that no possible augmentation of numbers can, for many generations, even supposing all colonisation entirely stopped, be more

than this country can well and easily provide for, if its public policy be sound, and its energies fairly called into action. Whoever has seen the district of country in which you, Sir, live, and the splendid improvements in agriculture which have been made, and are still making, will see also, that my assertion is not rash, notwithstanding the high authorities to which it is opposed. Whoever is informed, that the very same land, which some years ago was rented at three shillings, and abandoned as not worth five shillings, has since produced seventy-nine bushels of barley per acre, for forty acres together, as proved by actual measurement, and testified beyond all possibility of doubt; that large tracts of country, upon which a grain of wheat was never attempted to be sown, are now perhaps the most productive of that great article of human food of any in the island; and learns that the little port of Wells alone, which formerly imported annually ten thousand quarters of wheat for the subsistence of its neighbourhood, is now enabled, and that too with a population almost doubled, to export twenty thousand, and compares this with our generally defective state of cultivation throughout Great Britain, cannot be easily led to be alarmed with apprehensions of increasing numbers. The upper stratum of our coal mines, upon which the prosperity of all our commerce and manufactures so entirely depends, has been, generally speaking, long exhausted; but we have had the good sense and the ingenuity to dig deeper: the whole range of natural philosophy has been pressed in to our aid; the powers of various engines and machinery have been successfully applied, and we now go on in the perfect confidence and enjoyment of a supply fully adequate to our wants and demands. Why should not the produce of agriculture be contemplated as equally capable of augmentation and improvement? We know by actual experience, that it really is so; and why should we then turn our view rather to a reduction of mouths, which must necessarily be attended by a reduction of productive labour, and therefore of positive public wealth, than to the best means of enabling us to feed them? In short, I can neither hesitate to believe nor to state, that there is hardly any limit, either of prosperity or population, to which the produce of a country like this may not, with a proper encouragement afforded for its growth, and under a favourable state of public

policy (points which I shall discuss hereafter), be presumed to carry us. China, properly so called, without any aid, at least worth mentioning, either of foreign trade or intercourse, supports a population, which to us appears quite incredible, but which has been ascertained by an actual census to be more than double that either of England or of the provinces of Holland; and is still advancing with a rapid progress. In the beautiful language of the latest writer I have read on this interesting portion of the globe, "even her rivers are crowded with the habitations of men, and at Canton alone a million of individuals are born and die in floating houses. Her tillage is elegant and minute: it appears to be a species of extensive gardening. Her numerous trades and arts have augmented to meet the wishes and the luxuries of her middle and opulent ranks: and the Chinese public is so infinite as to supply work to *all* the industrious, and their nation is so populous and wealthy as to reward *all* the laborious." With this instance, even under a despotic government, I shall close my observations on this subject of population: it is worth all the abstract reasoning in the world, and speaks a language that cannot be contradicted. I must however add, in reply to Mr. Malthus, who maintains, that the increase of the produce of the earth must be gradual, and very slow, that it may most unquestionably far outstrip the increase of population, and will, in fact, if not unnaturally retarded, always keep pace with it.

Another remedy, proposed by the same authority, as a part of the same system of policy, is the total abolition of the Poor Laws, either instantly, or at least gradually. But, Sir, numerous as are the evils and abuses with which their administration is now attended, I cannot conceive a measure of so much severity either politic at the present, or necessary at any future moment. The main source of mischief is not here, as is plainly proved by the single fact of the very same code, as to all its most essential enactments, having existed during a period of more than one hundred and seventy years of the most brilliant portion of English history, before any material inconvenience or injury resulted from it.

The next great panacea held out is the establishment of national schools, and the universal education of the lower orders. But even granting in its fullest extent the moral and religious obligation

of forwarding this great object, and I am not among those disposed to question it, yet it is quite clear, that it can never be trusted as a remedy for the evils which we are now deploring: and whether there may not even be some danger of carrying such a measure to excess, by elevating the poor above that sphere of life, in which, as a body, Providence itself has destined them to move, by leading them to submit with less patience than becomes them to that sentence of "earning their bread by the sweat of their brow;" and whether we may not sometimes be teaching the head to reason, when it would be better to teach the hands to work, are questions which need not be examined here, and which I willingly leave to more able disputants to discuss and to determine. It is quite certain, on one hand, that ignorance has not been the cause of our pressure; and, on the other, that the great scholastic improvements of Bell and Lancaster have now been many years in action, whilst pauperism has gone on with accelerated progress; and that few are hardy enough to contend, that either the industry or the morals of the poor have been much improved. No, Sir, we must cut still deeper before we can reach the seat of our present gangrene; and whatever benefits may be supposed to flow from such a remedy, we must be contented to value, not as the *primum mobile* of relief, but as its concomitants.

Another friend of humanity steps forward to console us by a plan of "congregating the poor in large masses in our workhouses;" and by proving to us, by a long detail of culinary economy, how easily and how cheaply they may be subsisted; by instructing us in frugal recipes for soup and porridge; and by interesting observations on the nutritious qualities of ox-cheeks, red herrings, treacle, and boiled cabbage. In all such schemes, however, except as applied exclusively to children, the aged, and the infirm, there is such a mixture of humanity and cruelty, of mildness and of degradation, that I shall only observe of it, that it seems to me as admirably suited to cherish every evil of pauperism, as it can be to find subsistence for the paupers it is calculated to create.

The last resource I shall notice is that now proposed by the honourable gentleman who brought this question forward, *viz.* to render the funded property liable to a tax in aid of the parochial assessments to the poor-rate. It may seem, at first sight, but very

reasonable, that property of every description should be made available to public services; and in the present instance plain justice might seem to require it, and especially in the case of those who have been instrumental in creating the very burthens it is intended to relieve. I mean those, and there are many such, whose fortunes have been made in trade or in manufactories, by the assemblage of labourers brought together from all quarters to the spot where the manufactory was established, and where they rapidly formed their settlements, and then, upon the first stagnation of the trade in which they were employed, have fallen as a dead weight upon the land, whilst their late masters have calmly withdrawn their capital from such a channel, and vested it in the funds, where they are enabled to derive a clear and unincumbered income, and left the landed proprietor, in some cases, even a loser by the possession of his estate. Still, however, there are many strong objections to the policy of adopting such a measure. Personal property has but just been rescued from the odious burthen of the property tax—a tax never again, I trust, to be saddled on the backs of the British people. Let us be careful how we lend a fresh sanction to such a principle, and again level the barrier we have just repaired. Let us pause before we throw open all personal property as a plain and defenceless source of taxation, and again introduce a lash, before the scourges, which it has so lately inflicted, have ceased smarting. For it is vain to imagine, that such an impost, if once admitted, will be long confined either to the funds or to parochial assessments. Nor, again, can any relief of this kind be looked to as of permanent duration; because the fundholder and contractors for loans will soon comprehend the risk at which their money is advanced to the state, and will be careful to estimate at their full amount the unascertained charges and deductions to which their interest is exposed, and which the public must in some other shape make good. Another objection is the direct breach of faith it involves with the public creditor; and another, still more formidable, that, by feeding the disease, you will only increase its malignity. It is a melancholy but unquestionable truth, that the demands of pauperism, under our present system, will always be fully proportioned to the means raised for satisfying them; and that there is no quantum of provision, not even the whole income

of the country, at which you could say, "this will be fully adequate." Pauperism has, in this respect, every character of our other degrading vices, is equally insatiable in appetite, and ruinous in effect.

Having been thus delayed, much longer than I expected, by reviewing these various plans, which have found so many advocates, I am now free to enter upon that, which I conceive to be the only safe and practicable mode of examining such a question; viz. by ascertaining the origin itself from which our evils have flowed, and then recommending the adoption of such remedies as may be best suited to the case. The cause of a distemper will often of itself point out its cure; and, besides this, it is idle to pretend that it is unnecessary and immaterial to begin here; because, if we are to restore those good old times of England, upon which memory dwells with so fond a recollection, it is only to be done by carefully tracing back our footsteps, and by accurately noting every point of aberration, until we arrive at that happy spot where we once dwelt so safely. That the evil does not proceed from excess of population, upon which I have already made some observations as a proposed remedy, is quite clear from the fact, that the increase of pauperism has at some periods so infinitely outstept the increase of population, and at others been so far from keeping pace with it, as to show that they have in truth but very little relation to each other. In the year 1776 the increase of the poor-rates exceeded the proportionate increase of population by upwards of half a million, in the year 1792 by a million and a half, and in 1803 by upwards of three millions, or in other words by considerably more than half the amount then paid. Last year, with an increase of population since 1783 of at most three millions, they have risen to the enormous amount of eight millions; a sum more than six times the amount then paid. The same fact also proves, that it is not from the deficiency of employment, as Mr. Clarkson has most justly argued; and which may as readily and as surely be inferred by the simple recollection of those more prosperous periods, in which, with a population very nearly if not quite so great as the present, no murmurs and no complaints of this kind were heard. The depreciation of money, except as connected with taxation, is equally inadequate to solve the problem of our present state of

pauperism; and, in short, turn whichever way you will, it is in the history of our wars, our debt, and our taxation, that you can alone find the cause of our bane, and it is here also you must look for your chief antidote. I have already stated, that the Act of the 43d of Elizabeth, which directs us to find for the poor either subsistence or employment, and which is the great basis of all our subsequent regulations, had been in force for upwards of one hundred and seventy years, *viz.* from 1601 to 1775, the great and lamentable æra of the American war, without having caused any public detriment. Industry had not flagged, the spirit of independence had not been broken, and the morals of our poor were still simple and uncorrupted. But, Sir, from that moment downward, with the exception of the short interval of nine years, viz. from 1783 to 1792, which were years of peace and of prosperity, and during which they almost remained stationary, notwithstanding the great increase of population, they have continued to rush upon us as a deluge of waters, increasing as it rolls forward by tributary streams, and threatening to overwhelm both the rich and the middling classes, and even the poor themselves, in one common mass of ruin.

If you look, Sir, to the minuter details of this argument, you will find with how exactly equal a pace pauperism on one hand, and debt and taxation on the other, have advanced upon us. Without going farther back than the last twenty-five years, though the very same connection subsists through the period of the American war also, you will find, that, in 1792, when the amount of taxation was hardly one third of what it amounted to last year, the poor-rates were but two million six hundred and forty-five thousand five hundred and twenty pounds: in 1803, when the taxes rose to two thirds, the rates had risen with them to five millions; and in 1816, when the taxes had been pushed to near seventy millions, the poor-rates also had mounted up to eight millions, a sum equal to the whole public revenue when his present Majesty came to the throne: and, if the various charities established and supported during that period be included, we have no reason to suppose Mr. Curwen incorrect when he estimates the whole relief at twelve millions, or a tax of twenty-six per cent. upon the whole rental of the country.

With respect to the effects of this enormous weight of our public burthens, as the cause of pauperism, they can excite but little surprise when we reflect how they operate throughout the whole range of the community, upon the owners and occupiers of land, upon the clergy and the manufacturers, upon our agricultural labourers and their families, who constitute more than two thirds of our parochial poor, and upon every poor weaver, artisan, and mechanic throughout the realm. With respect to the proprietors of the soil, we all know that outgoings and charges are and must be reckoned, by the occupiers, but as another name for rent. Now, to take the periods I have just mentioned: in 1792 one third of the value of the produce of a farm might, upon a common average, be fairly afforded by the tenant to his landlord; in 1803 it had become necessary that the land should produce four times the amount of rent; and, in 1816, five times the amount has not been more than barely adequate to meet the charges: I mean independent of any extraordinary capital employed in extraordinary cultivation; or, in other words, the progress of taxation has gradually, during the last twenty-five years, diminished the annual value of the land to its owner in the following proportions: every acre, of which the yearly produce could be made to *average* six pounds, was, in 1792, worth forty shillings rent, in 1803 worth thirty shillings, and, in 1816, worth only 24 shillings. Great fluctuations in the price of agricultural produce may, for any given moment, affect perhaps the accuracy of such a statement, where the land is only meant to be rented from year to year; but it can hardly be necessary to remark, that, for any permanency, both the tenant, the landlord, and the state, must calculate upon a system of general average, and not upon any extraordinary increase or depression, which may be produced by extraordinary emergencies, and will again cease with them.

Now, Sir, such a diminution of income *can* be submitted to by very few, and still fewer *will* submit to it without struggling hard against it, and without many oppressions being inflicted on those beneath them, as the only expedient of shifting the burthen from themselves. The landed proprietors are far from being addicted, as a body, to sordid habits of avarice; nor is money, with very few exceptions, found to accumulate in their hands faster than a slen-

dy provision for the younger branches of their families absolutely calls for. That ancient hospitality, and those voluntary acts of charity, which formerly softened with their genial influence the asperities of society, and bound together its various links by the gentlest and yet firmest bond of union, has now ceased, or is fast ceasing. Improvements of houses and of grounds, the sources of prosperity to trade and of employment, are now suspended; and those luxuries of life, which are the best objects of financial imposts, and which heretofore contributed to benefit alike the public revenue and those who supplied them, can now be indulged no more. Nay, Sir, thousands and tens of thousands are driven to seek in exile a refuge from these oppressive burthens; and that France, whose woes and miseries we have pitied so long, for which our treasures have been lavished and our blood has flowed in torrents, is now repaying her debt of gratitude, by furnishing an asylum to our own citizens and reduced soldiers from the exactions of the tax-gatherer and the demands of the excise. The produce of our imposts on all articles of luxury necessarily therefore fail as the call for them becomes diminished; and, as the public expenditure must be still supported, it becomes needful either to augment those which bear upon the first necessaries of life, or at least to continue them when they ought to be removed. Rents, however, it is urged, may be even still lowered. Alas! in some places they have ceased to exist at all. There are now estates in the most fertile parts of England, nay even within fifty miles of London, which are an absolute loss to the possessor. And what can it avail a state, or profit the lower classes, to annihilate the gentry of the land, when, by so doing, they are cutting up the best guardians of public freedom, the brightest ornament of our country's honour, and the best source of national wealth and national prosperity?

With respect to the occupiers of land, I mean as tenants, they are more than half of them, at the very moment I am writing, actually insolvent, living upon present credit, and feeding upon future hope; a hope which never can be realized, so long as taxation and pauperism are ranged in their present formidable array against them. Agricultural labour and improvements are in an unparalleled state of stagnation—not because they are not as much

wanted as heretofore, but from the absence of all means to defray their charges; and thus the effects of the present pressure may for years to come be felt in its pernicious consequences upon the best interests of the state. The spirit of agriculture evaporates much more easily than it is excited, and the fertility of the soil may much more easily and speedily be exhausted than restored. *Ut corpora quæ lentè augescunt citò extinguuntur, sic ingenia studiaque oppresseris facilius quàm revocaveris.* Yes, Sir, that respectable class of English yeomanry, whose fathers from generation to generation have lived upon the same spot, and cultivated the same farms, are now rapidly dwindling into poverty and decay, sinking themselves into the class of paupers, and soliciting, from those so lately their companions and their friends, that aid which they had been accustomed to administer and supply.

With respect to the manufacturing part of the community, to tradesmen, and to mechanics, they have long felt a melancholy conviction of the distresses of the times. There was a period, when they were disposed to be clamorous for cheap bread; but they have since found, that the ruin of the hand that supplies it is but the forerunner of their own. The truth is at last felt and acknowledged, that agriculture cannot suffer without the whole fabric of society suffering with it. How far it is still possible for them, with the heavy duties imposed upon every thing they make, and with a price of labour necessarily enhanced double or treble beyond that of any other country, to meet the foreigner in his own market, I cannot presume to determine. If they can do so, it speaks well for British ingenuity: and sorry I am, that this is all the encouragement we can afford it. But, Sir, too much stress is often laid upon our foreign commerce of exportation; which, after all, constitutes but a very small part of our trade, when compared with our home consumption. But internal consumption must always be regulated by internal wealth; because the very idea of purchase implies, or ought to imply, the means of paying for it. But internal wealth, I have already maintained, and must here again do so, is perfectly visionary and hopeless under a situation of things such as we are now plunged in. We may drag on a miserable existence a few years longer, but the bubble must explode at last.

With respect to the pressure of taxation upon the poor, I have no wish to employ any thing, either of argument or language, which can be construed into an intention to irritate and inflame; nor, in fact, could any thing be well added to the impression they daily and hourly feel from its tremendous influence. It reaches them through a thousand channels. It descends through all ranks and gradations of society, collecting fresh force as it rolls on, until it falls with its accumulated weight upon their heads. It has been calculated, and upon grounds we have no cause to question, that every poor man, who earns but eighteen pounds a year by his labour, pays eight pounds out of it, upon a fair average, in indirect taxation; or again, in other words, that, except the air he breathes and the water he gets from the stream, every thing he requires for his subsistence costs him more than double it would do, if the burthen of taxation were removed. Nothing farther on this point need be added. Let me not, however, be supposed to be so wild a theorist as to imagine, that a government can be conducted without contributions levied upon those for whose protection it is instituted, or that any just and reasonable demands should not be cheerfully complied with. I am not only ready to admit this, but I am farther aware also, that all our ablest writers on the policy of states agree with Montesquieu in his doctrine, that moderate taxation is a public benefit; that it both stimulates industry and tends to reward its exertions. But then the same great authority has told us likewise, that "the effect of excessive taxes is slavery; and slavery produces a diminution of tribute."

But it may be asked, why I thus insist upon an evil, which cannot be avoided, and must now be borne. I know, Sir, that a day once past cannot be recalled; that a vice or an error once committed cannot be so undone as to render us *ab initio* pure and innocent; but their effects may generally be alleviated by future caution. The health that is injured by excess, may be often restored by abstinence; and an almost ruined fortune be repaired by strict frugality. It is this lesson of common wisdom, I would gladly teach; a lesson which, amidst all our miseries, we have yet to learn. We spent last year, though in a state of profound peace, and with our enemies prostrate at our feet, twenty millions more than our income. The expenditure of the present year is

held out by the project of ministers to be capable of a reduction of six million five hundred thousand pounds; and thus we are taught to hope "that both ends may meet." What financial quackery may be brought forward to effect this curious problem in arithmetic I am yet to learn. What legislative nostrums are to be administered for our malady is yet hidden in that deep abyss of secrecy, from which have issued so many wonderful expedients in these latter times. Let me implore my country to rouse from this sleep of death. Pare down, yes, to the very quick, establishments which only feed and nourish the very discontents they are intended to allay and quell. Let the government intrench itself in the loyalty and affections of a grateful and happy people, not in the midst of armies, whose weapons are retained for the purpose, if need should be, of being used against their own countrymen. Reduce the interest of your debt; and, if nothing else will do, let a national bankruptcy rather be proclaimed at once. It is infinitely better, as Hume has wisely observed, "that thousands should be sacrificed to the safety of millions, than that millions should be sacrificed for ever to the temporary safety of thousands." Nor can I here help reminding you of the prophecies of that acute and sagacious observer of human character and manners, uttered at a very early period of our present system of finance.

"Suppose," says he, "the public once fairly brought to that condition, to which it is hastening with such amazing rapidity; suppose the land to be taxed eighteen or nineteen shillings in the pound (for it never can bear the whole twenty); suppose all the excises and customs to be screwed up to the utmost the nation can bear, without entirely destroying its commerce and industry; and suppose that all those funds are mortgaged; and let us consider the necessary consequences of this situation. Though the imperfect state of our political knowledge, and the narrow capacities of men, make it difficult to foretel the effects which will result from any untried measure, the seeds of ruin are *here* scattered with such profusion as not to escape the eye of the most careless observer.

"In this unnatural state of society, the only persons who will possess any revenue, beyond the immediate effects of their industry, are the stockholders. These are men who have no connections in the state, who can enjoy their revenue in any part of the world

in which they choose to reside, who will naturally bury themselves in the capital, and who will sink into the lethargy of a stupid and pampered luxury, without spirit, ambition, or enjoyment. Adieu to all ideas of nobility, gentry, and family. The several ranks of men, who form a kind of independent magistracy in a state, instituted by the hand of nature, will be entirely lost; and every man in authority derive his influence from the commission alone of the sovereign. No expedient will remain for preventing or suppressing insurrections but standing armies; no expedient at *all* for resisting tyranny. Elections will be swayed by bribery and corruption alone; and the middle power between king and people being totally removed, a horrible despotism must infallibly prevail. The landholders, despised for their poverty, and hated for their oppressions, will be utterly unable to make any opposition to it. These seem to be events which are not very remote, and which reason foresees as clearly as she almost can do any thing that lies in the womb of time. And though the ancients maintained, that, in order to reach the gift of prophecy, a certain divine fury or madness was requisite, one may safely affirm, that, in order to deliver such prophecies as these, no more is necessary than merely to be in one's senses, free from the influence of madness and delusion."

Such, Sir, are my sentiments and convictions, grounded, not upon theory but practice, and established, not by opinion but by facts, which admit of no question, on the cause of pauperism, and on the only adequate remedy that can be applied to it.

I do not however deny, that there are many other abuses, which conduce to augment the evil, and which call loudly for correction; but they are such as did not exist until war, and debt, and taxation produced them; and they are such also as can only be remedied in proportion as the weight of taxation is removed.

The greatest of these, which I shall first notice, is the inadequate price of labour. It is a maxim which admits of no contradiction, that "the labourer is worthy of his hire;" by which we certainly mean such a remuneration as may enable him to subsist well. But that the price of agricultural labour does not by any means bear that proportion to the charges of subsistence, which it did in those good old times, which we profess ourselves anxious

to restore, may be seen by the following table of wages compared with the price of bread.

	Wages per Week.		
1760	5s., equal to the price of	28	quartern loaves
1785	8s., . .	16	Ditto.
1792	9s., . .	15	Ditto.
1803	10s., . .	12	Ditto.
1812	9s., . .	9	Ditto.
1817	9s., . .	7	Ditto.

But, Sir, it is not to bread only that we should here look; for it is not upon bread alone, that the families of the poor do or can subsist. And when we extend our inquiries to other articles, even of prime necessity, to salt, soap, candles, tea, sugar, and tobacco, &c., the inadequacy of the present rate of wages becomes still more glaring and apparent. I was going to have begun with malt, which, at the first period above mentioned, was one shilling and nine pence per bushel, and thus easily within reach of the poor man's means; but I soon remembered, that from this he had been entirely driven, and that beer was now no longer to be reckoned amongst the necessaries of life.

That this evil, glaring as it is, an evil which at once, *ex necessitate rei*, renders every poor labourer a pauper, annihilates hope, and creates indifference and despair, ought to be remedied, is clear and undisputed. But what, and whether any other remedy than that of restoring the ancient prosperity of the country by alleviating the public burthens, ought to be attempted by the legislature, is a point that may be fairly questioned. It is true, you have granted, as far as legislation can do so, a protecting price to the produce of the land; and have also regulated, by duties and drawbacks, and a variety of specific enactments, the state of commerce. But these ordinances have all a reference to our foreign transactions only; to the intercourse of nations with each other; and yet, even of these, it seems to be generally admitted, that one enactment has often had no other effect than to render another necessary, and thus to excite and keep alive a meddling spirit of legislation upon points which needed only to be left to themselves, and upon interests which would much better have found their own way unshackled by the trammels you have imposed. Labour is a com-

modity, which the poor man carries to market; and all we have to do is to enable the public to buy it. This market, I have already shown, has regularly and systematically been declining, as the taxation and poverty of the state increased. During the interval of peace which followed the American war, it had regained something of its former standard. The extraordinary influx of national wealth, arising from sources to which we can never look again, I mean the wonderful discoveries and inventions of various machinery in the manufacture of our cottons and our woollens, and the application of the almost unlimited powers of water and of steam, as substitutes for the tedious process of manual labour, enabling the produce of a single factory to vie with what had hitherto required the exertions of a whole province, and to crush, in point of cheapness, every idea of competition in foreign markets; thus making the whole of Europe our willing tributaries; and, in short, effecting a revolution in the commercial world hardly less extraordinary than the discovery of printing did in the intellectual; not only rendered us adequate to support the burthens that war had left behind it, and to recover the exhaustion it had occasioned, but also to lay the foundation of that strength, which has been so heavily tried in our late contest. Industry, therefore, could find its appropriate recompense; and labour was in request, because it could be paid for. But these circumstances are now exactly reversed.

That a large portion of the enormous sum, now raised under the name of poor-rates, consists of money which would otherwise, and much more wisely, be paid as the price of labour, is perfectly true; but it is distress and difficulties, that have chiefly caused this; a feeling on the part of the occupiers of land, that they had nothing to lay out, which they could possibly avoid, and which has led them to choose rather to submit to positive demand, even of equal value, than voluntarily to incur it. We see our ablest labourers, and the very bloom of our youth, lounging away their heavy hours under the hedges, and in our public roads, while labour is actually neglected in the fields, and the fences suffered to go to ruin. This mode, I hardly need observe, is most pernicious in its effects. It requires more to support it than useful industry, employed at a reasonable rate. It is a premium upon idleness; a direct encou-

ragement to sloth and profligacy. It levels, also, all distinctions of merit amongst the poor themselves; distinctions as highly valued, and which should be as carefully encouraged, as among the higher classes of mankind. It destroys the spirit of emulation, and robs our ploughmen, our seedsmen, our harvestmen, of all those objects in which rivalry is innocent, and ambition is a virtue, and which tend so powerfully to make them happy and contented with themselves, and satisfied in the condition in which Providence has placed them. But who will now strive to draw a straight furrow, when he that draws a crooked one is equally encouraged? Who will be industrious, when no one can be so industrious as to be not a pauper? *Spes præmii laboris est solatium* is an old maxim, and it certainly requires more energy of mind than can ever be generally calculated on, to act upon any other principle. These are truths, however, which I have often urged, which have been as often admitted, but which there is not spirit to redress. Nor do I know how any interference of legislation is to correct the evil. Magistrates may do well to insist upon its impolicy and injustice; they may recommend and advise; gentlemen may set a better example on their own estates, as you do, and may urge their tenantry to pursue it: but I see no way for the legislature to *compel* the employment of the poor, and to *dictate* a minimum of wages, without at once bursting through every barrier of civil liberty, and subjecting the private concerns of every private individual to the management and controul of a state reward. No, Sir, it is relief from our public burthens, that must first restore both agriculture and commerce to prosperity: by which I do not mean high and extravagant prices for their produce, but the possibility of affording it at a cheap rate; and we shall then have no need either to dread population, to congregate our poor in workhouses, to rack our heads to find fresh objects of taxation for their maintenance, or to be sitting in committees of inquiry into the state of pauperism. The statute of the 43d of Elizabeth might then, however, I should think, be safely and wisely limited to those objects for whose benefit it was originally intended—to very numerous families of small children, to the orphan and the widow, the sick, the aged, and the infirm; and in the mean time a very great alteration in the code, as far as regards settlements and removals, might be immediately

made. If his labour be all the poor man has to carry to market, he should at least have no impediment thrown in his way of making the most of it he can. The whole kingdom should, as far as is possible, be thrown open before him, and be made one family. But under the present practice I need not enumerate all the various difficulties opposed to him from the fear of settlements, if he venture to attempt to sit down in any parish but his own, and the various combinations that are formed to drive out all those who do not belong to the spot they live in. Formerly the hind went to yearly service during the best part of his youth and the first vigour of his age, made his settlements upon different parishes, none of them being uneasy as to where he might ultimately fix himself by marriage. He passed through the various gradations, beginning with harrow boy, and ending with driving the head team, or acting, if his abilities and capacities deserved it, as a sort of bailiff or inspector of his master's business. During this period, his wages, which were gradually augmented, were principally saved, and he was thus furnished with the means of setting out in life, when he married, with comfort and satisfaction. But it is now the great object of the farmer to avoid admitting a male servant into his house. No man will hire either labourer or servant for a year from another parish. The landed proprietors, who can get possession of whole parishes, by acting on these principles of caution, are enabled to procure their labourers, at a reduced rate, from adjoining townships and villages; to shift off entirely the burthen from their own shoulders; and even to turn to a good account the distresses of their neighbours. Thus are insulated and private interests for ever at war with the general good.

And, Sir, whenever a period, as I before observed, shall arrive of greater prosperity, or rather of less distress than this, these questions, both of employment and subsistence, where health and strength are not wanting, should not for a moment be deferred: for, on one hand, it is vain and idle, not to say impious, to hope, that throughout a whole population, of an amount like ours, neither want nor wretchedness shall be found; that even vice and laziness shall not feel those fruits, which the God of nature has expressly ordained they should draw after them: yet such is the direct tendency of the indiscriminate relief that is now granted. It may

be urged, perhaps, that several statutes are in force to punish idleness. But why then foster it with one hand on purpose to correct it with the other? Many difficulties about employment would even now vanish, if, instead of immediately offering a very high minimum of allowance, you were always first to give its full weight to that maxim of antiquity, which has its foundation alike in truth and nature, "that necessity is the mother of invention;" and would remember, that real humanity does not consist in a simple removal of immediate pressure, but also in a due regard to remote consequences, and in the application of those general rules, to which in all great cases of morals, as well as of government, it is the part of sound philanthropy as well as of philosophy to appeal. "The land must maintain us"—"We are not to starve"—"We are to live out of it as well as the rich"—"Is this enough for bread?"—are observations, which, however abstractedly true, the poor should not be taught to make, and which a magistrate should never want the courage and firmness to resist; or at least he should carefully inculcate and enforce the conditions, which such truths imply, and without which they are anarchy and nonsense. To restore their industry and independence are objects which should never be lost sight of. All parties have, in fact, been instrumental in destroying and sacrificing these great blessings: all should struggle hard to restore them: the state by relieving us from our intolerable burthens: the rich by enabling the poor, as far as they possibly can do so, to earn their own subsistence; and the poor by fortitude, patience, and frugality.

On the other hand it might fairly be presumed, that labour would much better both find and maintain its level if all compulsory enactments relating to it were entirely done away. Under the present absurd practice, not content with having recourse to one of the alternatives of the Act, you think to be doubly sure by availing yourselves of both, and bid the applicant, whatever may be his powers and skill, go and "get what he can," as the phrase is, "and you will then make up his earnings;" rendering him at once as indifferent to his earnings as he is to the quantity or quality of the labour he performs. But if these enactments, or perhaps I ought rather to say the abuses that have risen out of them, were swept away, just as much labour as at present would still be re-

quired, whether in tillage or in manufactures, but which the labourer neither could nor would perform, except upon such terms as gave him an adequate recompence; and which recompence might be more, but certainly could not be less than a fair subsistence. It is true the demand for the article he deals in might fluctuate, in proportion to the prosperity of that branch of trade in which he is particularly concerned: but, in the first place, I know of no grounds upon which the lower classes can reasonably claim an exemption from those temporary losses and inconveniences to which their employers themselves are subject. I know nothing which is to place them beyond the reach even of the visitations of Providence itself, and to render a bad harvest and a failing crop, or a ruined and stagnated state of commerce, a matter of cool indifference. Many strong reasons, both moral and political, might be urged, why things should not be so. Again, when we see every day the wonderful exertions of that voluntary charity, of which it may truly be said in England, that it "never faileth," even in the worst of times; when we recollect, that, at this moment, it is computed at the enormous sum of four mllions a year, what might not reasonably be looked for from its energies in a cause like this? what has it just effected for the labourers of Spital-fields? Or, if it should become really needful, what might not be looked for even from the legislature itself, in grants of occasional bounty, such as it often has made even to strangers and aliens, when driven to take refuge on our shores? This would be to restore to industry its native stimulus and encouragement, to cut off from fraud and imposture the motives upon which they rest, and the morals of our poor would be thus improved. They would rise in their own estimation as they rose in virtue; and though the present generation is, I fear, not destined to behold it, yet we might indulge the hope of their yet once more becoming, what they once existed, a free, manly, and independent race, frugal and industrious, cheerful and contented, simple in manners and in heart.

I am, Sir, Yours faithfully, GEORGE GLOVER.

P. S. For many ideas contained in the above Letter, and more particularly in the latter part of it, the Author has to acknowledge himself indebted to a very able and enlightened friend and magistrate, whose signature would much better have recommended it than mine.

AN

INQUIRY

INTO

THE CAUSES

OF

Agricultural Distress.

BY W. JACOB, ESQ. F. R. S.

London.

1817.

AN INQUIRY, &c.

Of the Effect produced by our Currency on Agricultural Productions.

IN all inquiries into the causes of the present distressed situation of our agriculture, it has been too much the practice to refer it to circumstances, which, on examination, will appear to have had very little, if any effect on it.

The state of that currency which has been used as the medium of all exchanges, and the standard of all values, and which, during nearly eighteen years, had been progressively increasing in amount, has been considered as the cause of an unnatural elevation in the price of landed products at one period, and of as unnatural a depression at another.

Those who have thus accounted for it, have alledged, that the introduction of a paper in the place of a metallic measure of values, had caused a superabundance of that measure which had reduced its power, and thus apparently increased the prices of commodities most unnaturally; that when this paper standard became lessened in amount, the prices of commodities became as unnecessarily low, as before they were unwarrantably high; and that a great part of the evils under which the agriculture of the country at present suffers, may be attributed to that cause.

In examining this hypothesis, it will be right to inquire, if the increase of Bank-notes (including those of the country bankers) could have been owing to any other cause than the increased riches of the community, which required an increased quantity of this circulating medium, for the purposes of effecting the requisite exchanges of the various species of commodities.

It is scarcely to be denied, that for the twenty years previous to 1812, the increase of national wealth had been going on with a rapid, and yet regular pace; that the savings arising from the aggregate capital, land, and labour of this kingdom, had very far

exceeded in amount the various loans which the different individuals who compose the community had made to the government, and which had been expended in the operations of war, or other unproductive modes. By wealth it cannot be supposed is meant either money or paper, but that property which was gradually accumulated in the possession of individuals or corporate communities, and which is equally wealth, whether it be measured by one standard or the other.

It will not be denied that the public works, such as bridges, roads, canals, harbours, drainages, and embankments, as well as the shipping, the marine, and military stores of the government, had increased; that the quantity of land in cultivation had increased, the mode of cultivating improved, and, as a necessary consequence, the annual amount of gross products had been augmented; that the number and breeds of cows, sheep, horses, and hogs, were superior to what had before that time existed; that the quantity and value of agricultural implements and machinery was greater than before; that the mills and other machinery employed in our various manufactories had greatly increased; that the amount of raw materials, as well as of finished or finishing goods in the hands of the merchants and manufacturers, had increased most extensively.

It will be allowed that the different retail traders throughout the kingdom, had larger stocks of goods of various descriptions, than at any former period; that the number and tonnage of ships, barges, boats, and other craft, had received a great augmentation; that our mines of coal, as well as of iron, copper, and other metals, had experienced the same increase in their products; that besides this increase of active capital, the increase of inactive capital had been no less extensive: the furniture of every residence, from the palace of the prince to the cottage of the peasant, had been increased in quantity and quality; the number and dimensions of houses, the carriages, horses for pleasure, and every kind of clothing and ornament, had received a similar increase.

It may even be contended that the increase of our population is an increase of wealth; that every labourer arrived at maturity, and instructed in any art, should be estimated as riches, and be valued at what his subsistence has cost to that period, or at an annuity equal in value to the excess of his labour above the cost of his maintenance.

This increase of wealth which has arisen from the usual sources, the land, the capital, and the labour, must be the excess of production above consumption after the whole of what has been expended in war, and other non-reproductive operations, and constitutes the national debt, has been deducted from that excess:

the accumulation then of national wealth may be considered to amount to the whole of the increase laid out in the various articles which have been specified, and to the sums lent to the government by individuals; for if the loans to the government had not been less than the national savings, all the different branches in which wealth is invested would have been diminished; there would have been less land in cultivation, fewer ships, houses, mines, roads, bridges, and canals, less goods in warehouses and shops, less furniture and clothing, and fewer human beings would have been reared to a state of productive labour: had the loans to government been equal to the national savings, the different branches into which wealth is divided would have remained stationary; but an increase having taken place in every article that constitutes wealth, it may be fairly contended, that the national debt accumulated within the twenty years under consideration, is but a part, and probably a small part, of the gradual savings from the different members of the community.

It may be said that an increase of expenditure is no proof of an increase of wealth; that people frequently spend more than their whole property, and with more thoughtlessness when their property is absolutely gone, and nothing but their credit left to them, than at any other period. This may be, and undoubtedly is frequently the case with individuals, but can never happen to a great community, unless the debts owing by that community to foreign nations, exceed the debts which foreign nations owe to it; a case which most assuredly does not apply to Great Britain, whose credit to foreigners far exceeds the amount of its debts to them.

The increase of national wealth is certainly much promoted by the facility with which commodities can be exchanged; a facility much greater in this than in any other country, and depending partly on the ease with which commodities can be removed from the possession of one man to that of another, and partly on the ease with which their relative values can be estimated, and the balance of values adjusted.

This latter purpose can only be effected by some medium generally adopted and equally acknowledged; and it would be better, if, without much expence, it could be some substance itself, not varying with the variations of other commodities. This last property is perhaps difficult to be found; for even gold within the last few years has fluctuated with the fluctuation of commercial or political events as much as any other commodity. Though perhaps the system of the paper currency of Great Britain is far from perfection, the paper has been found practically, for eighteen years, as correct a standard of the value of property, and has

possessed as easy convertibility into every commodity, as any metallic currency whatsoever.

The exchange of metallic into paper currency has been of considerable public benefit. By using paper as the measure of value, and the medium for exchanging values, gold has fallen into the rank of other mercantile commodities, and thus, from being a dead, has become an active capital, constantly by its reproductive powers increasing the sum of national wealth.

A metallic standard is of the most importance to a small state depending wholly on its neighbours for the supply of some articles and the consumption of others. Thus Venice, Genoa, and Hamburg, from the necessity of buying and selling more than they produced or consumed, would have been impoverished without some metallic standard, to which reference could be always had in that which was their principal dependance, their exchanges of commodities with foreigners. But on the other hand, in Great Britain nine parts in ten of our productions are consumed at home; and what we consume of foreign productions does not amount to a tenth part of that which we consume of our own growth. The principal object then in this kingdom should be to encourage internal production and internal consumption, as on these we mainly depend; but the states before mentioned mainly depended on foreign production and consumption, and, therefore, to them a metallic standard was indispensable.

A question will naturally arise: Can the quantity of metallic standard be so increased as to be commensurate with the quantity of commodities whose exchange must form the basis of our prosperity? If it can be so far increased, will not the quantity of capital, which will thereby become inactive, clog our internal production more than it will benefit our external commerce? We must be regulated by our own actual situation, and not by abstract theories, illustrated by examples drawn from the smaller states. If our agriculture and internal commerce be estimated as ten, and our external commerce as one, the increase of the first at one tenth, would be equal to doubling the latter. Now if the abundance of the means of exchange which a paper currency affords, be somewhat injurious to our foreign commerce, and that it may be so in some degree must be admitted, it is so beneficial to our greater object, as to allow of no hesitation in determining which of the two must submit.

Whatever may be used as the measure of value, whether it be a metallic or paper standard, must be in sufficient quantity for the speedy exchange and circulation of commodities; as the quantum of national wealth increases, an increase must be required in this medium of values; for though by various contrivances an economy

in the use of this standard has been introduced into this kingdom, yet that economy has not been so great as to supersede the necessity of some increase, as the amount of values increase.

It may perhaps be successfully contended, that too great a portion of this medium cannot be issued if the issuers be solvent and prudent; if they issue no more than is really profitable to them, and issue none upon insufficient or unconvertible securities; if they issued more than the proper quantity which the necessities of the community required, it would be corrected either by returning on them so rapidly as to leave no profit, or it would reduce the rate of interest so low, as that the issue of a large sum would produce no more benefit with a greater risk, than they would acquire by the issue of a smaller sum with a diminished risk.

It will appear probable, that the issues of the Bank of England, and of the country bankers, were at no period greater than the requisite facility which the exchange of commodities demanded, if we consider that the interest of money has never been lower during the period under our consideration than the legal maximum; that the best landed securities, with the most approved assurance for the punctual payment of the interest, could not obtain money at less than five *per cent.* and that more has been given, either by borrowing on redeemable annuities, or in the shape of procuration or commission, or under some title framed to evade our absurd laws against usury.

It must be allowed, that among the many individuals who have issued bills, some have been too rash and improvident; and by lending the funds thus raised either on insufficient or unconvertible securities, or by employing them in unsuccessful speculations, in objects distinct from banking, have suffered themselves, and have inflicted on others, the most severe calamities. This, though a great evil to the individuals, was not equally injurious to the community; the labor put in motion by this capital produced riches sometimes to the nation at large; and frequently the effects of that labour were more beneficial to one part of the community, than the evil suffered was injurious to another.

The evils arising even from imprudent issues, have perhaps been estimated too high. The quantity so issued was small in proportion to the whole circulation, and smaller still if compared with the whole quantity of commodities whose exchange was facilitated by it; or if compared with the labour to which, during its continuance, it had given activity. To whatever extent, however, this evil may have prevailed, it was only one of those which must occur in the mixed condition of human affairs, which presents with every good some abatement of ill.

If there be any truth in the representation here given of the increase of national wealth, and if in consequence of that increase a

greater quantity of circulating medium became necessary, we may refer to facts, and examine what probability there is of an excess having existed. It appears that in the year 1795, the amount of Bank of England notes in circulation was to £.12,700,000; the amount of gold then in circulation has been variously estimated, some making it about £.12,000,000, others stating it as high as £.30,000,000. If we take the medium, and calculate that the gold and notes together amounted to £.30,000,000, it will be nearly equal to the highest sum that at any period the Bank has had in circulation.

The great increase then must have been in the notes of the country-banks, which every where, except in the Metropolis, and in some districts of Lancashire, formed the medium of exchange in all smaller transactions. If it be considered that no country bankers issued notes to any extent above the value of £.10, and that by far the greater proportion were for £.5, and the smaller sums, that whoever had a considerable amount in these small notes would naturally convert them into Bank of England notes, we shall not estimate the amount of country-bankers' paper very high.

The number of country bankers has been about eight hundred: taking it on an average that the circulation amounted, when at the highest, to £.20,000 for each, the whole sum would be £.16,000,000. If it be supposed that the quantity in circulation in 1795, amounted to one third of that sum, we naturally ask, if such an increase in the circulating medium as 10 or 11 millions was not absolutely necessary for the requisite purpose of exchanging the increased quantity of our commodities? If the amount of the paper in circulation of the Bank of England, and especially of the country bankers, is now greatly lessened, may it not be attributed to the depreciation of agricultural produce and its consequences? Was not the increase at one period, and the diminution at another, in our circulating medium, the effect, rather than the cause, of our agricultural prosperity or adversity? In fact, has not the quantity of paper in circulation been regulated at all times by its own demand?

Had the superabundance of paper at one period, and its deficiency at another, been the cause of the elevation and depression of agricultural products, would not the same effect have been produced on all the other various commodities which form the objects of our national wealth? By the discovery of the mines of America, and the consequent introduction of an enormous quantity of silver, then the only medium of exchange, the price of *all* commodities felt nearly an *equal* elevation; and the same would have been the case at present, had the hypothesis been correct, that the assumed depreciation in our currency was the cause of the great rise in agricultural productions.

Of the relative increase of population, and of food.

Some persons, in attempting to investigate the causes of the present distress of the agricultural part of the community, have thought, that owing to the stimulus created by the advanced prices of the different species of food, our improvements had been carried to such an extent, so large a quantity of fresh land brought into cultivation, and that previously in cultivation so much better managed than formerly, that we had increased our produce beyond the increase of our population, and thereby created a glut, which could only be relieved by lessening our cultivation.

If this view of the subject should not be correct, and if from its general belief it should be acted upon, it may produce the most disastrous effects to the community, at a future and no distant period. An examination whether our permanent supply of food has increased faster than our population, may, therefore, be entitled to an attentive investigation.

It deserves to be remarked, that in every other age and country, the population has kept pace with, or rather preceded, the supply of food: on the most fertile soils, and in the most benign climates, the want of food has been the great and principal check to population; the labour of man, however stimulated, or however favourable the circumstances in which he has been placed, has in no case been sufficient to procure so much food as to enable the country to spare for the wants of other countries one twentieth of its produce. Thus when scarcity has prevailed the most in England, or in the parts of southern Europe, the United States of America did not send one fiftieth, nor Poland one hundredth part of its produce to all the distressed countries.

It is well known that in the year 1812, the greatest scarcity of food was experienced in this Island; and the improvements in lands already in cultivation, with the fresh lands brought under the plough, will not be found sufficiently considerable to warrant the opinion, that we are now arrived at a point, from which we can calculate, *communibus annis*, on a supply of produce exceeding, if fully equal, to the consumption of our increased and increasing population.

The increase of the inhabitants of this island, within the last twenty years, has been three millions. To feed the additional population, would require that one million five hundred thousand acres of land should now be sowed with wheat more than produced that grain in the year 1795. As wheat cannot be grown on the average more frequently than once in five years, there must be to meet the increased demand, seven millions five hundred thousand acres more land in arable culture, than was so occupied at that period.

We may now consider what probability there is, that seven million acres have been added to the arable lands of the kingdom within the last twenty years; or that such a quantity is likely to be added for some years to come, even if the produce of such a land were selling to a profit, instead of a loss as it has lately been.

To bring into cultivation and to render fit for the growth of wheat, land which has been in a state of nature, requires an advance of capital, of which few persons not immediately concerned in agriculture, have an accurate conception. It must differ according to the greater or less difficulty with which it can be worked, or to the greater or less quantity of manure which it requires, or to its vicinity to extraneous substances fitted for improvement. But it will not be thought too high to estimate the expence which must be incurred before any return can be made, at £.10 per acre.

If this be not over-stated, and no one who has turned his attention to the improvement of land will deem it so, then seventy or eighty millions of capital must have been added to the agricultural stock, besides what has been expended in the cultivation of lands before in an arable state, but not highly cultivated.

It appears by the Parliamentary documents, that during the twenty years ending with 1812, there had been passed by the Legislature, one thousand six hundred and forty bills for the inclosure of land. That the number of these bills is no accurate criterion to determine the extent of fresh land brought into arable tillage must be granted; but in the absence of more sure guides it may assist conjecture. It will not be deemed too small an estimate, to calculate each bill as providing for the inclosure of ten thousand acres; giving a result of one million six hundred thousand acres. If the land brought into tillage without the intervention of the Legislature, amounts to the same quantity, it would not be together half the additional extent of land which our increased population requires.

If the additional quantity of land brought into cultivation had been as great as the supposition we are combating contemplates, the number of horses employed in agriculture would have increased since that impolitic tax on them was imposed, in a much greater degree than they appear to have done by the accounts of the revenue laid before Parliament. Everyone is aware that the different descriptions of land differ as much in the strength required for the tillage, as they do in the quantity and kind of manure necessary for their improvements. The lighter soils, which require the greatest portion of manure, may be worked perhaps to advantage with three horses to each hundred acres; whilst the soils of greater tenacity, though needing less manure, may require five horses to the same quantity of land. Taking then the average of the recently improved tillage lands as requiring four horses to each hundred acres, and supposing

the quantity 7,500,000 acres, we should find an increase of near three hundred thousand husbandry horses; whereas, by the Tax-office returns, the increase does not amount to one-fourth of that number.

If then the quantity of new land brought into cultivation has not been adequate to supply what the demands of the increased number of the people require, we may take a view of the improvements recently made in the modes of cultivation, and examine what probability there is, that on an average of years our food has been so much increased on the long-cultivated lands, as that they should have now become, with the aid of the newly-cultivated, more than sufficient for our sustenance.

As far as the mere culture of grain, especially of wheat, goes, it is by no means clear, that we have made any improvement on the knowledge or the practices of our ancestors. There are not wanting respectable authorities for the opinion, that by fallowing less than formerly, and by ploughing less deep, we have been more frequently subject to mildew than in former periods. However this may be, it will scarcely be contended that any material increase in our crops has taken place, as far as mere corn is concerned.

The great improvement has been in the introduction of turnips, the more frequent occurrence of green crops, and a general amelioration of the system of rotation. These, indeed, are very valuable improvements, as by them the land yields a greater quantity of sustenance both for man and beasts; and by maintaining a greater proportion of the latter than was formerly supported, the land becomes improved, instead of being impoverished, by every successive rotation of crops.

Allowing this improvement then as gratefully as the most enthusiastic agriculturist can desire, we may inquire how much these improvements have extended within the last twenty years; and what real power for feeding our population has been derived from them. The growth of turnips, of clover, of tares, and the other valuable green crops, had been making a gradual and regular progress for fifty years before the commencement of the period we are now considering; and though that progress was continued through the whole period (till the last two years, when it has received a check), yet it does not appear to have received any uncommon extension, or to have spread itself with unusual rapidity.

In many extensive districts it is now scarcely practised at all, or practised in so slovenly a manner, as to afford but small aid to the national subsistence. It would be estimating sufficiently high, to calculate the increased produce derived from land previously under the arable culture, if we suppose it to have been augmented in the last twenty years, a little more than one tenth beyond what it was in the year 1795.

If the result of this investigation, which after all can only approximate to the truth, should lead us to conclude, that whilst we have been adding to our population (which twenty years ago was ten millions, and is now thirteen) three tenths, we have increased our means of subsistence, by bringing fresh land into culture, somewhat more than one tenth, and by improving that already in cultivation to about the same extent, we shall then be placed in the same situation as other progressive countries have uniformly been; we shall then find that our number of people, and our means of feeding them, have kept an equal pace; but that the former in its march has somewhat preceded the latter.

It will be easily seen that the whole of this inquiry has proceeded on the average product of a course of years, and does not include such a year of extraordinary production as that of 1813, which, as we shall see presently, so far exceeded the usual average of our harvests, as to have produced distress rather than benefit to the community.

It is of the greatest importance to the welfare of the community, to ascertain whether the present depreciation in the prices of all agricultural productions arises from temporary, or from permanent causes; if it arises from the former, and is imagined to arise from the latter, the effect will be, that we shall lessen our agricultural products to an extent that may produce a scarcity approaching to famine.

On the variations in seasons, and their recent effects on agricultural productions.

Although the price at which productions will sell, is in some measure regulated by the proportion betwixt demand and supply, yet it is by no means in the ratio of the excess to the demand in times of superabundance, or in the ratio of deficiency to demand in times of scarcity. Thus, if the demand be as ten, and the supply as eleven, the price will be depressed more than ten *per cent.* If, on the other hand, the demand be as ten, and the supply as nine, the price will be raised more than ten *per cent.* If the demand continue the same, and the supply be as twelve, the price to which the production will be reduced, will be far more than ten *per cent.* lower than it would have been with a supply at eleven.

It will not be necessary to carry this illustration farther, though it will be obvious that in the case of excess of supply beyond demand, the depreciation will be much greater in a commodity that is quickly perishable, than in one that will retain its properties for a long period. Even in articles that lose none of their virtues by being preserved, but from their bulk require considerable space,

the depreciation will be greater than in those which are more easily removed or stored at less expence. Thus potatoes have felt a much greater depreciation than wheat, from their perishable nature; and from being bulky, when raised at a distance from a large town or a populous district, they have not borne even the expence of conveyance to the consumers.

The prices of commodities are also influenced in some measure, and occasionally in a considerable degree, by the prevalence of public opinion, as to the proportion between demand and supply; and, in articles of the first necessity, to a greater extent than in those of inferior consideration. This influence, however, is of a transient kind; and the opinion on which it is grounded, is generally corrected before any very injurious effect is produced.

From the great variety in soil and climate within this island, the produce of our harvests generally does not vary so much as a slight observer would suppose. The wet seasons, which are injurious to our cold and heavy soils, are beneficial to those of the opposite description; and a summer of great drought, which parches the lighter soils, and lessens their productions, increases those of the heavier soils. There will, however, be variations in productiveness, but usually not to a great extent.

Perhaps on a large average of years, not including one or two of very uncommon character, it will be found, that taking the standard as twenty, in the best years their production may have reached twenty-three, and the worst, not fallen short of seventeen; and that most of our harvests have been at some period between seventeen and twenty-three.

If the views we have taken be tolerably correct, we may presume that for the past twenty years, if our production has been as twenty, our consumption may be estimated as twenty-one; and this estimate will be confirmed by the excess of our importation beyond our exportation of corn for that period, as shown by the public documents.

Previously to the year 1811, there had been for several years a gradual increase in the prices of corn, such as must have happened if, as in every other country, the population had a little preceded in its march the production of food. This increase had given a stimulus to agriculture; the capital which had accumulated in that branch of industry had been invested in making further improvements; some extraneous capital also was attracted into the same channel, and in consequence a greater portion of labour was exercised in cultivation than it had before received.

The harvest of 1811 was miserably deficient; and before one half of it was threshed, the deficiency became obvious; prices rose with rapidity, and to a height scarcely ever known before. The advance in price came too late to produce much influence in the

ensuing harvest. Some spring wheat indeed was sown; but its effect in aiding national subsistence was trifling, as the same land would probably have produced more food, if, as usual, barley, and not spring wheat, had succeeded to turnips.

The deficiency of the harvest of 1811 was not made-up by that of 1812, which probably reached the average of our usual production, or one-twentieth less than our consumption. The same price thus continued, and appearing to be almost permanently fixed at a rate that would pay the most expensive cultivation, it gave a stimulus to still greater agricultural exertions; no cost was spared in the purchase of manures; every portion of land capable of bearing corn was appropriated to that purpose; the usual and regular courses of cropping were generally deviated from; and a breadth of land sown, far exceeding what had ever before been done. Potatoes, which had borne a higher relative price than corn, were cultivated also to an extent before unknown.

The year 1813 proved highly propitious; all the different species of corn were favoured by the seasons, whose variations seemed exactly executed as if to promote abundant vegetation; the weather whilst harvesting this crop was unusually favourable; and this bountiful supply, housed under such happy circumstances, proved as good in quality, as it was excessive in quantity. The impression of its abundance upon the public exceeded the reality; and this impression was further strengthened by the piety of government, who directed a special office of grateful devotion to be offered up in all the National Churches on the occasion.

It is extremely difficult to estimate the quantum of excess in this year of singular character. As far as pretty extensive inquiry, and not inattentive observation, may enable us, we may attempt the calculation without the fear of erring very materially. Most of the farmers on poor lands, whose usual growth of wheat had been twenty bushels to the acre, in that year allow that their growth amounted to from twenty-four to twenty-five bushels; those on better lands usually producing twenty-four to twenty-six, produced from thirty to thirty-two bushels, and on the very best wheat lands some have stated their excess above the usual production to amount to eight bushels.

Allowing the difficulty of accuracy, and requesting that indulgence which the nature of the case requires, it will not be deemed presumptuous to estimate this great production at twenty-six, taking, as before, the average production as twenty, and the consumption as twenty-one: this will account, if tolerably accurate, for an enormous depreciation in price.

The happy events which led to the peace, followed each other in quick succession. Soon after our harvest was securely housed, the foreign ports were opened as well as our own, and a large impor-

tation of foreign corn was made. The words Peace and Plenty have been so commonly joined together, that the public expected some union by which one must necessarily produce the other; as if a magical operation was to be performed by the cessation of war, by which either the earth was to become more fertile, or the physical necessity for food become lessened.

Partly from the clamours of the populace, partly from the state of the foreign exchanges, and, perhaps, partly because the measure originated with their political opponents, the alterations in the Corn-laws, which it was afterwards found necessary to make, were protracted by Ministers till the greatest mischief was effected; and then, when too late to be of any service, they were enacted amidst as much popular confusion as could have happened had it been done at the proper period.

Notwithstanding the surplus quantity of corn produced by the harvest of 1813, the markets would not have been so ruinously depressed if the law had protected the grower early against the foreign competitors. A sufficient number would have retained their stock, or at least a part of it, till a more distant period; but, seeing no check on the foreign corn, and dreading a larger quantity than even could be imported, each rushed to the market, the produce rapidly fell, till at last it seemed permanently settled at a price from thirty to fifty *per cent.* below its actual cost. Those farmers who were obliged to sell, and who are the far greater proportion of the body, when they wanted money to pay their rent, taxes, and labourers, were under the necessity of selling a double quantity, to realise the usual sum; and thus a glut was produced, which has been attended with the most serious consequences.

The harvest of 1814 was by no means abundant in quantity, and the quality of the wheat was so bad in general, and yielded so little flour, that it may be fairly estimated below the average rate of our production. The surplus of the preceding great harvest, and the quantity imported, which was increased by the expectation that the Corn-bill would raise the price, were sufficient for the consumption of the year; but left a very small stock on hand to meet the future wants of the country. The harvest which followed in 1815, was a month earlier than our harvests usually are; and from the surplus of the great harvest, from the imported quantity, and from the harvest of 1814, instead of twelve not more than eleven months' provision had been consumed, when the next harvest commenced.

The very low price at which wheat was sold, has increased the consumption very considerably; and the inferior qualities of it, which would produce but little at the market, were used for fattening cattle, and for other purposes to which wheat was never applied before. Thus a degree of profusion in the use of it has

has rendered the surplus quantity of little avail towards supplying any future scarcity that may occur.

The harvest of 1815, which has been before stated to have taken place a month earlier than usual, found us with a small quantity of foreign wheat of an indifferent quality in the granaries at the sea ports, and but a small stock in the hands of the grower, probably not more than sufficient for our consumption to the usual period at which our corn is harvested.

The productiveness of the harvest of 1815, most certainly was below the average of our consumption, at least if the whole may be judged of from the Southern parts of the island; but still the markets became lower, not from abundance, but from the impoverished condition of the cultivators. At an unusually early period a great quantity of new corn was produced in the markets; the pressing demands for money could only be met by sacrificing at less than half the cost the greater part of the year's production, and even that became insufficient to satisfy only the most pressing wants; the inferior wheats could not be sold at any rate; the prices were so low that only wheat of the best quality would suit the palates even of the poor; and accordingly at this early period there is felt a scarcity of the finest kinds of wheat. The same profusion of the inferior descriptions has continued; and the probability is, that before the harvest arrives, a sensible deficiency will be discovered.

Thus from the alarm produced by an expectation of enormous importation of foreign corn, added to a surplus at home, our own prices have been reduced so low, as to bring ruin on many cultivators, and a loss of capital to all, which, whatever may be the future demand, must prevent them from bestowing on the land that labor, which can alone enable it to produce nearly sufficient for our subsistence.

If the Corn-bill passed in the last session of Parliament, had been enacted when it was first proposed, it is probable that the price would have been kept at nearly its cost, notwithstanding the surplus quantity. The general profusion in the use of corn would not have taken place; some of the surplus would have been stored to meet future periods of scarcity; and the land whose culture is now slighted, and neglected, would have been kept up to that full power of production, which is now from the loss of capital gradually diminishing.

On the present and future effects of the Depression of Agriculture.

It is not unusual to hear those who have paid but slight attention to the nature of Agriculture, express their surprise, that a year or two of actual loss, should be productive of so much distress as is

complained of at present; especially when following years in which the cultivators have gained large profits. They ask, Cannot those who during several years have gained on the amount of their capital a larger share of profit than other members of the community, endure the discontinuance of that profit, or even some loss, without suffering more than has been inflicted on their neighbours?

It may not be amiss in the first place to remark, that in those years in which the produce of the land has borne the highest prices, they have seldom been very much raised till a large part of the growth of the more numerous portion, the poorer farmers, had passed from their hands into those of the corn-merchant, the factor, or the meal-man; and, therefore, those who most needed, have been the least benefited by such high prices. The fact is that the smaller class of farmers are under the necessity of selling their produce early; long before the deficiency is apparent; and therefore, never can have the full benefit which the richer part of the profession, the smaller number, may sometimes gain.

Very high prices of produce, such as were obtained three or four years ago, have been occasioned by crops deficient either in quantity or quality; and then, such advanced prices amounted to but little more on the whole growth of the year, than a good crop would have produced at lower prices.

Whatever gains have been made in prosperous years by the great mass of cultivators, however much they may have increased their substance during those years, it has not usually been diverted into other channels than that in which it has been acquired. It has generally been expended either in improving the soil already under cultivation, or in preparing land, before in a neglected state, to bear the most valuable crops. Thus this increase of property, added to what they had before invested in agriculture, has only increased their loss. It is almost needless to state, that all land recently brought into cultivation, instead of repaying any part of the capital expended upon it, or even any interest, has not paid the annual expenses of seed, labour, and taxes; and the loss has been equal to the capital expended, and the annual rent.

It will thus appear, that a series of years of moderate prosperity and accumulation, if that accumulation has been re-invested in the soil, is not a compensation equivalent to the disastrous events which the two last years have produced; in which probably the whole rental of the corn land in this kingdom has been paid (as far as rents have been paid,) not out of the profits, but out of the capital of the cultivators.

The first of the evils, a long train of which must follow, has fallen on the labouring poor, whose wages, indeed, have not been

lessened to the full extent of the reduced prices of the produce of the land, and who, could they obtain employment, would have no great reason to complain; but their sufferings arise from the scarcity of labour. The farmer has no means, and no inducement to employ labourers, the cost of whose labour is greater than he can hope to be paid for; and should corn now become higher in price, the greater part of his growth being sold, he would still be unable to pay those whom, excited by hopes of further improvement, he might wish to employ.

At no period in the memory of man, has there been so great a portion of industrious agricultural labourers absolutely destitute as at the present moment. They cannot procure employment, and parochial relief is doled out with a scanty hand, by those who want even the pittance that is bestowed to pay the few workmen they are obliged to employ. This evil is not likely to be lessened, but, on the contrary, must increase as the capital of the farmers approaches nearer to annihilation. To them it will be of no consequence that labour is cheap, and corn scarce. The capital, which, by setting in motion the labour, would increase the quantity of corn grown, is departed, and a long period must elapse before it can be again collected.

The mechanics and tradesmen, whose principal dependance was on the agriculturists, and who form a very large proportion of the kingdom, are in a situation not much better than the labouring poor. Their best customers can scarcely employ them; and for the little trade they have, instead of being paid with punctuality as heretofore, they are glad to receive a very small proportion, and defer the remainder to a future period. This evil extends to all the other classes not immediately dependant on the agriculturists; and it would be difficult to point out a single branch of industry, that is not suffering under the influence of the general depression.

The higher classes of the community, the landed proprietors, whose wealth and rank are as beneficial to the poor as to themselves, must suffer in their revenues and their comforts, as well as in their feelings. They have been warranted in living very nearly up to their annual incomes; and, in general, cannot be capable of very great retrenchments, without denying themselves many comforts, and even luxuries, in the furnishing of which, numerous members of the community have found the means of subsistence. It is notorious that rents cannot be paid, except in a few partial instances; that as the capital of the tenants is diminished, their means of paying must become lessened; and, for many extensive portions of land, no tenants will be found who have the means of cultivating them. Thus that important class, the pillars and the ornaments of our country, are already in some degree, and must

more extensively, hereafter become sharers in the general calamity.

This slight sketch of the evils which have already resulted from the depression of agriculture, and whose extent must be yet increasing, is by no means overcharged. The subject is too painful, or it might be much enlarged. Alarming, however, as this representation is, it is by no means equal to those which the future presents. The distress of the agriculturists has been stated to have already diminished the labour applied to the land. The withdrawing of the labour will diminish the produce; and if the opinions before stated, of the proportion between our supply of food, and our consumption, be nearly correct, a very small diminution in our produce, which is already begun, and will surely continue, must reduce the community to a state approaching to famine.

It may appear ridiculous to those who suppose we are overloaded with food, to talk of approaching famine: they may think, that having already too much corn, we shall never again feel a deficiency of that necessary article; but let it be considered, that during twenty years, we have regularly, with one exception, felt a deficiency; that in the whole of that period, if not rapidly, our agriculture was regularly increasing, whereas now it is at least as rapidly on the decline; that many producing farms are now absolutely and totally without cultivation; that the number of such farms is daily increasing; that the land which has hitherto enjoyed its full portion of labour, is deprived of the greater part; and that the population has increased, and will continue to do so till it is checked by a scarcity of food. If these facts are correct, and it is scarcely possible that they should be controverted, the time cannot be very distant when our cultivation will be so much diminished, that after a harvest but a little below the ordinary rate of productiveness, our deficiency in corn must be too great for any surplus in foreign countries to supply our wants, however high the price we may offer for it.

If it be true that at the commencement of the last harvest, there was not a surplus of wheat sufficient to supply us for more than a month; that the produce of the last year was below the average of twelve months' consumption; that unless the next harvest happens as early as the last, thirteen months' consumption will be requisite; that from the distress of the farmers, the markets early became overloaded, and were depressed to a price that created profusion in the use of wheat; that the cultivation of potatoes, that useful substitute for wheat, has, from the losses sustained, nearly ceased, except in the vicinity of large towns or populous districts; and if we consider that the price of wheat is in most parts of Europe so high, as to indicate a scarcity rather than a

surplus; we may conclude, that a considerable degree of want will prevail before any new wheat is produced.

If such scarcity should happen, and a probability appear of such a price being maintained as will repay the expence of cultivation, those who have not quite exhausted their powers, may continue the growth of corn to a moderate extent; but, should it happen that the present depression continues, the prospect will be gloomy indeed: the great number of cultivators who will have been driven from the occupation, the increased quantity of land without culture, and the slovenly manner in which what is cultivated will be managed, must produce scarcity, famine, and depopulation.

Suggestions for Alleviating the Present Distress.

If we could allow ourselves to suppose, that without a forfeiture of the public engagements to the public creditors, without neglecting the future defence of the country, without ingratitude to its gallant defenders, and without lessening the most useful establishments, we could reduce our expenditure so much, as to enable ministers to take off the great weight of taxation, it would be easy to anticipate an effectual remedy for our distress, as then the price of each article which composes the cost of corn would sufficiently fall. But the dividends must be paid; the ships, the magazines, and stores, naval and military, must be kept up; our heroes must receive their (but too inadequate) remunerations; the various public establishments must be supported; and, therefore, we can scarcely hope for a great relief from this burden, till the riches of the community shall be again brought into that progressive state of increase, which, notwithstanding the universal prevalence of the most expensive wars, was going on for twenty years, and which received a check through the ruin of that branch of industry, which, in importance and extent, exceeds the whole of the others.

We have indeed been informed, that about seven or eight millions of taxation may be this year dispensed with, and that, so far, the burden on the community will be lessened. If we allow, as in candour we must, that those entrusted with the administration of public affairs, are likely to be best informed as to the extent of the supplies which the necessary expences of government require, the same candour will not restrain us from inquiring, how far the manner, in which it is proposed to lighten the burden, is most likely to give speedy and effectual aid to those who most feel its pressure.

The property-tax, proposed to be reduced to one-half its present rate, is perhaps, of all the modes of taxation, the most equable, effectual, and economical, that has ever been introduced into this

or any other country. Being principally derived from rents or salaries, which would probably have been expended on non-productive objects, it has had less effect in checking the increase of riches, than any other tax which would have produced an equal sum. By being drawn solely from income, it has not trenched on the capital which has been left to produce by its natural effect a future increase. It is, besides, a tax, from which the poorer classes, who subsist wholly by their labour, are totally exempt; and this ought to be a strong recommendation of it to every man of humanity. It is the only tax which falls on the man who resides out of the country, but derives his revenue from it, and who surely ought to bear his proportion in paying the interest of that debt which has been incurred in defending his property. It is the only mode, by which many of large property and small expenditure, the miserly and niggardly, can be made to contribute their due share to the necessities of the state; and to all these considerations we may add, that it is collected at a much lower rate of expense than it would cost the public to obtain the same sum in any other way.

These observations apply to the *principle* of the tax, that every income (excepting the mere wages of labour) should bear an equal proportion of the public burdens. There may, in the detail, be many parts susceptible of improvement; but objections arising from the detail do not affect the principle, which will scarcely be questioned by any reasonable man. Against the present plan of conducting the operation of this tax, only two objections require to be noticed; the one is from the farmers, who complain, that having no income, they are now obliged to pay upon a suppositious revenue, calculated in other times and under other circumstances. To this objection it may be replied, that at the time the calculation was made, it was generally deemed rather beneficial than oppressive to the body of cultivators; but, if from a change of circumstances it has become injurious to them, the Legislature can, and doubtless will, enact proper measures for suitable relief.

The greatest or most clamorous objections to the property-tax, have been found among the middling and smaller class of traders in the large towns. Divesting their objections of all party feeling, and neglecting the mere oratorical spoutings of the flatterers of the populace, they may be resolved into the injury and mortification of disclosing the amount of their incomes to Commissioners, who, though bound to secrecy, are armed with powers chosen to be denominated inquisitorial.

It must be admitted, that where a man's prosperity depends on that mixture of capital, industry and credit, from which the persons now alluded to draw their subsistence, a disclosure which

lessens the latter may very sensibly injure him, and ought to be most carefully guarded against in any future regulation of the details of the law. But it is scarcely possible that the power of the Commissioners should be lessened without depriving them of that necessary controul, without which all deriving their profits from trades and professions, might, if they chose, greatly evade the tax.

It is well known that the amount of the aggregate incomes of the trading part of the community has appeared in the returns to the Tax-office much less than their apparent numbers and weight in the scale of society had previously warranted, and from this a considerable degree of suspicion has been excited that evasions to a great extent were practised in that class. It is most probable that this suspicion may have given rise to rigour on the part of the Surveyors and Commissioners, and led to some disagreeable and even unjust decisions; these, however, are minor evils, not affecting the principle of the tax, "that contribution on income should be equal," but entering into the detail which may be, and probably will be remedied by future enactments.

After these observations on the Property Tax, we may venture to inquire, if Government can afford to diminish the taxation to the amount of seven or eight millions, whether the way proposed, the lessening of this tax, is so beneficial as lessening the imposts on other objects which press with more force on the community.

If the great object of the Government be, as it cannot be doubted but it is, to encourage cultivation and to relieve agriculture in its present distress, the most prominent article which presents itself for a diminution of duty is malt; this tax, necessary without doubt when first imposed, is the most heavy on the farmer and the labourer of any in our whole catalogue of imposts. In many instances the duty on malt amounts to much more than the Property Tax at ten *per cent.*; it most certainly does so in all corn-growing lands on which labour is abundantly bestowed. That this may not appear an extravagant assertion, let us suppose an acre of land for growing corn to pay a rent of one pound, and a property-tax of one shilling and sixpence; ploughing, harrowing, sowing, reaping, harvesting, and threshing, the produce, if it be wheat, will require at least fourteen days of the labour of one man; the least expense of the daily allowance of beer, even if brewed by the farmer, will be threepence on each day's labour, or four and sixpence the acre. Now as the duty on malt is two-thirds of the price, the farmer's expense on his acre of land will be three shillings in malt, whilst his property-tax if at ten *per cent.* would be but half that sum. There are no doubt considerable variations in the quantum of malt-duty paid by each acre of land; some-

being in pasture requires little labour, and consequently pays but little malt duty; others, though in an arable state, may be worked to advantage with less of human labour; but the occupiers of such land stand less in need of relief than those who, cultivating less genial soils, can extract produce only by a considerable exertion of labour; this is the greater portion of the agricultural community, and to their relief ought the first attention of Government to be extended.

By diminishing the duty on malt, the agriculturists would feel other and immediate benefit; the diminution in price would increase the consumption, and the increased consumption would probably raise the price of barley so high as to remunerate the grower, or at least sufficiently high to give encouragement to continue his cultivation of that grain with some prospect of future advantage.

Though not immediately connected with the subject of agricultural depression, it may not be improper to hint that reduction in the cost of beer would be beneficial to the health, the morals, and, consequently, the happiness of the labouring classes of society. The use of that beverage, if pure and cheap, would give a check to the profuse consumption of ardent spirits, which, however beneficial in some cases, is, when carried to excess, attended with baneful effects.

It will scarcely be denied, that if as much of the tax on malt were given up as amounts to two millions and a half,[1] it would benefit the whole community, but especially the farmers and labourers in a greater degree than a larger sum if deducted from the property tax.

The duty on salt is one of those very heavy imposts that presses with peculiar weight on the two classes of the community which we are now considering. It is well known that animal food preserved by salting forms a considerable part of their sustenance during the greater portion of the year, and as the tax is nearly twenty-fold more than the original cost, the cheapness of it would not only be advantageous to those who consume it in preserving food, but would extend its valuable use to many purposes from which the high duty now totally excludes it.

Soap and candles are articles of necessity to the poor, and as indispensable to them as to the rich; the impost is very heavy, and its alleviation, as well as that on leather, would be peculiarly beneficial. These taxes, the most felt by the two classes whom we have considered as most important to be relieved, would not

[1] The average quantity of malt that has paid duty in the last twenty years, has been 25,000,000 quarters. If the war duty, laid on in 1804, of 2s. per quarter, be taken off, it will amount to the sum stated in the text.

amount, including with them the malt tax, to more than has been proposed to be taken from a tax less onerous on the farmers, and principally falling now on that portion of the community who have less claims on the public for indulgence.

It is, perhaps, difficult for private individuals, to estimate what degree of attention should be paid by ministers to public opinion; and, therefore, harsh censures ought not to be passed on their conduct, when they appear to sacrifice the interests of the many to the clamours of the few, because those few are collected together in large masses. But it will scarcely be doubted, that if the cultivators and the labourers were brought together, and their opinion taken, whether ten *per cent.* as property-tax should be continued, and the duties on malt, salt, soap, candles, and leather, be abolished, or these duties continued, and the property-tax abolished, that they would prefer paying the property-tax to those duties. If then public opinion ought to weigh in the scale of public good, there is no doubt which way the majority of our people, those who inhabit the country, and subsist by agriculture, would decide.

These remedies are not pointed out as likely to produce either a speedy or an effectual cure for the evils under which the country is suffering; nor is it in the power of Government to administer any other than palliatives. It is with this conviction, and only as a temporary measure, that a bounty on the exportation of corn can be suggested: should it be adopted for a short time, and on a limited quantity, it might, perhaps, at an early period, raise the price of corn to its cost; and, if that were the case, it is probable it would prevent that extensive defalcation in the quantity of land sown, which must otherwise take place.

If, for instance, a bounty of fifteen shillings per quarter on wheat, was allowed on the first 500,000 quarters exported, unless, before that quantity was shipped, the average price amounted to eighty shillings, and a proportionate bounty on other grain, it is not improbable that the bare prospect of that quantity being sent out, would have an effect on the market sufficient to encourage future growth.

The taxes proposed here to be taken off, with the bounty to be paid on the exported corn, would not amount to more, if so much, as the chancellor of the exchequer has the intention of removing; and by this mode, a greater relief will be given to the landlords, to the tenantry, to the labourers, and to the tradesmen depending on them for employment; as well as to the various manufacturers and merchants, who supply those traders, than by the mode which has been proposed in Parliament. And as these classes form by far the largest portion of the community, it may be presumed, that the whole population would be much more benefited by it.

The public funds, that portion of national wealth, which one part of the community has lent on the security of the whole property of the country, could not have been carried to their present extent, but for the savings which have enabled individuals to lend to the public. As then these savings have been diminished by the whole amount of the losses which the agriculturists have sustained, it cannot be expected, until some stop be put to further diminution, that any measure of finance, however plausible, will effect that advance in the funded property, which a peace ought naturally to have produced. As the losses borne by the landed and agricultural interests have, for the last two years, amounted to much more than the whole sum extracted from the whole nation by taxes, the relief of those bodies from their severe pressure, and their restoration to that moderate degree of prosperity they before enjoyed, could gradually by their accumulation increase the demand for funded property, and thus give the fundholder that benefit, which he ought fairly to have calculated upon, in the event of such a peace as we have obtained.

ON

THE MEANS

OF

ARRESTING THE PROGRESS

OF

NATIONAL CALAMITY.

BY THE RIGHT HONORABLE

SIR JOHN SINCLAIR, BART.

Either the means of Circulation must be increased, or the burdens and payments to which it is liable, must be diminished. *There is no other alternative.*

LONDON.

1817.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE fate of this country depends upon the measures to be adopted by Parliament, in the course of the present Session, respecting the national currency. If nothing effectual be done, to restore that system of circulation, under which the nation has flourished, (the nature and advantages of which the Author has endeavoured to explain in the following pages), he apprehends, that the most fatal consequences must be the necessary result. If the restriction on cash payments at the Bank be too hastily abolished, our circulation will necessarily be so much reduced in its amount that the revenue must become more and more unproductive;—our agriculture must suffer additional degradation;—our commerce will be still farther diminished;—and thousands of industrious labourers, besides those already out of employment, will not be able to find the means of subsistence. By an augmented circulation, on the other hand, the farther progress of these calamities would be prevented, and there is every reason to hope, that the country would soon be restored to its former state of general prosperity.

Deeply impressed with a conviction of the solidity of these doctrines, the Author could not hesitate to lay before the Public, the grounds of the opinions he entertains. The continuation of the Bank Restriction, until a specific proportion of the National Debt be discharged, and a considerable reduction of the Taxes has been effected, is the point which he is most anxious to inculcate, and which he begs leave earnestly to recommend to the reader's attention.

That the subject herein discussed, is well entitled to at least *Parliamentary investigation*, he trusts will be generally admitted; and that by evidence before Committees of both Houses, it be ascertained; 1. Whether the diminution of the circulating me-

dium has, or has not occasioned our present difficulties; and, 2. Whether an addition to it, would not infallibly restore our national prosperity. *Both points are capable of being either proved or disproved.* If this Session pass over, without these two points being most carefully inquired into, and finally determined on, it will, probably, in future times, be accounted one of the most unfortunate circumstances, that has hitherto taken place in the annals of Great Britain.

Ormly Lodge, Ham Common,
31st March, 1817.

N. B. Any casual increase in the price of Stocks, or any accidental addition to our trade, *ought not to prevent inquiry.* The evil is too deeply rooted to be affected by such events.—Nothing can arrest the progress of a national calamity, but a "*coup d'etat,*" (AUGMENTED CIRCULATION), the beneficial influence of which, by the restoration of credit and confidence, will be felt over the whole empire.

For increasing the circulation *in the country,* where it is most wanted, either branches of the Bank of England, or County Banks, with a sufficient number of partners, ought to be established; and to encourage them to fill up the void now existing, the stamps on notes ought to be abolished, or greatly reduced, at least for some time.

ON

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IN the course of a long war, unexampled in history, for the scale on which it was conducted, and the vast expenditure which it occasioned, Great Britain was compelled to try new measures, that it might be enabled to carry on the contest. Its foreign expenses could not have been defrayed, had it continued at home, a circulation in coin. It commenced therefore a new system, that of a circulation in paper, not convertible into coin; with this peculiar circumstance in its favor, that it was issued, not by the government of the country, but by an opulent corporation, the amount of whose issues was under the constant inspection and controul of Parliament. The nature of this system, which laid the foundation of the greatest era of prosperity and power that ever a nation enjoyed, shall first be briefly explained, before the real causes of the distresses we have lately experienced, can be thoroughly understood.

On the Advantages of an Abundant Circulation.

Hume was the first author who pointed out the advantages of an abundant circulation. In his Essay on Public Credit, he states, that among the ancients, it was the practice,

to collect a treasure in time of peace, for defraying the expenses of war; he then adds "that the opening of this public treasure, as it produced an uncommon affluence of gold and silver, served as a temporary encouragement to industry, *and atoned, in some degree, for the inevitable calamities of war*[1]." Had Hume seen these later times, he would have spoken in more decisive terms, of the advantages to be derived from an increased circulation; but, considering the period in which he lived, his having been impressed with the sentiments above quoted, is a proof of his great discernment.

2. *On the Necessity of an Abundant Circulation, in an Agricultural and Commercial Country, incumbered with heavy Debts and Taxes.*

The few transactions of a simple people, can be carried on by the intervention of barter, or with a small quantity of specie. Where the great body of the community live remote from each other, and raise at home the articles of food they require, and manufacture even their own clothing, money is not essential. But as society multiplies, transactions increase. The inhabitants of towns must purchase food, and the inhabitants of the country must procure from the towns, a variety of articles for which they have occasion. Every moment then teems with business. The necessity of abundant circulation greatly increases, when an extensive foreign commerce takes place. But when, in addition to domestic, and to foreign commerce, every individual in the country, possessed of property, must pay a large proportion of his income into the Exchequer, when immense sums are thence constantly collecting in the metropolis, to be again reconveyed into the provinces, the amount of circulation must

[1] Essays by David Hume, Esq. vol. i. p. 371. An abundant circulation is now necessary, to atone for the calamities of peace.

increase to an extent, which no metallic currency could furnish. Were it not indeed for Bank Notes, and Bills of Exchange, how could the Exchequer annually receive, seventy, eighty, or one hundred millions sterling, (no uncommon expenditure during the late war), and circulate again these immense sums, in the space of a few months? The very transfer of such sums, *in coin*, would be impracticable.

3. *On the superior Advantages of a Circulation, having merely a Representative, instead of an Intrinsic Value.*

It will appear from the following observations, that a circulation possessed of representative value, has many advantages over a coin circulation, in which intrinsic value is the object.

1. The materials for a circulation in coin, must be purchased from foreign nations, except by those who have mines of the precious metals at their command. If fifty millions of gold and silver must be employed in circulation, a country, to that amount, is impoverished, without any real necessity,[1] buying articles for which, with a paper circulation, it would have no occasion; and which, if coined, *is not available wealth*, since its exportation is prohibited, *as a great public offence*.

In barbarous times, when no credit or confidence existed, nothing passed as a medium of circulation, that was not of *intrinsic value*, for no man would then part with property, unless he received the actual value delivered to him in return. But now, when society is established on a more solid foundation, if the buyer can give to the seller, *representative*

[1] Mr. Atwood calculates, that it would require the labor of 800,000 able workmen, *for a whole year*, to obtain in return, twenty millions of guineas. What a waste of labor to purchase gold at that rate!—See *Prosperity Restored*, p. 200.

value for any commodity the latter parts with, for instance, if paper money be received in payment of the taxes imposed by government, or any debt due to an individual, or if it will purchase any article wanted, it is to the seller fully as useful, and in the payment of large sums, much more convenient, than if it had been made in the precious metals.

Justly is it remarked by a French author, "that if England were deprived of the advantages it enjoys from the circulation of Bank Notes and Bills of Exchange, and were obliged to replace them by coin in gold and silver, how many ages would it not require, to obtain that mass of metal, which it was necessary for her to procure; and what sacrifices of goods and merchandize would it not cost her?"[1]

2. It is a great advantage attending a *representative circulation*, that it can be augmented, on the foundation of solid property, according to the wants of the public, whereas a circulation of *intrinsic value*, cannot be increased but at a most ruinous expence, and is liable to great loss, from constant wear, and to great diminution, by fraudulent exportation. Hence the miseries of former wars compared to the last. Circulation was impeded, industry was cramped, and the price of commodities fell, while the burden of taxation was augmented. No public treasure, as Hume justly remarks, was opened, "*to atone for the calamities of war*." Whereas during the last war the country never enjoyed so much prosperity, *because its circulation was abundant.*

3. It is another most important advantage resulting from

[1] Si l'Angleterre, privée des avantages que la circulation des billets de banque et des lettres de change lui procure, étoit obligée de les remplacer par des monnoies d'or et d'argent, combien de siècles ne faudroit-il pas pour acquérir la masse de métal qui seroit nécessaire; et quels sacrifices en denrées et en marchandises son acquisition ne coûteroit-il pas?—*Essai sur le Crédit Commercial*, p. 47, note.

representative circulation, that *it is not liable to be hoarded.* So unwilling are those possessed of *metallic currency*, to part with it, that a great revenue can never be raised, where coin is the medium of transfer. In France, its coin is estimated at ninety millions sterling, yet with the utmost difficulty it furnishes a revenue of 80 millions, or 1*l.* 2*s.* 5*d.* per head; whereas in Scotland, a country so inferior to France in regard to soil, climate, and productions, each individual pays, in representative currency, at the rate of 2*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, or more than double. Those, therefore, who are anxious for *a coin circulation*, or what is nearly the same thing, a paper circulation convertible into coin on demand, must be satisfied *with a coin revenue*, and all the circumstances therewith connected.

4. *Result of the New System of Circulation.*

On the foundation of an abundant circulation not convertible into coin, we were enabled to pay enormous taxes; to borrow sums of money beyond all former example; to carry on, for a series of years, the most extensive wars; to subsidize most of the governments of Europe; to resist and ultimately to conquer the most formidable power that modern times has produced; and yet our agriculture, our manufactures, and our commerce, never were in so flourishing a state. History does not furnish an example of a nation, which *abroad*, ever made such almost incredible exertions, and where *at home*, so many millions of people enjoyed all the necessaries, all the comforts, and all the luxuries of life; all arising from a judicious system of abundant circulation.

We shall next proceed to explain the causes of that fatal reverse which we now experience.

5. *Sources of the National Distresses.*

Many intelligent persons are of opinion, that our distresses ought to be solely attributed *to excessive taxation*. That our taxes are enormous; that they are most severely felt by every class of the community; and that they occasion much distress, cannot be doubted. It ought not, however, to be forgotten, that we were lately subjected *to a much heavier load of taxation*, without feeling it so much as we now do. With the malt-tax, which pressed so severely on the landed and farming interests; and the property tax, which absorbed the tenth part of the income of every individual, we did not suffer so grievously as at the present moment. Our distresses therefore, cannot be solely ascribed to excessive taxation, though, when joined to other causes, affecting, first our agricultural, and next our commercial interests, it must have necessarily greatly contributed to increase the extent of the mischief.

1. *Causes of our Agricultural Distresses.* The exertions made to extend the cultivation of the country, and to augment the quantity of its agricultural productions, are quite unparalleled in history. Hence, for the first time, during a period of above twenty years, we were enabled, even with an ordinary harvest, notwithstanding a rapidly increasing population, to supply ourselves with a sufficient quantity of grain; but the crops of 1813, and 1814, were extremely productive, and the stock of corn in hand, in autumn 1815, *was very considerable*, while the demand was limited rarely exceeding what was necessary to supply, what is commonly called "a hand-and-mouth consumption."[1]

[1] These particulars are ably explained, in Letters on the Distressed state of Agriculturists, by Robert Brown, Esq, a farmer in East Lothian; printed by Longman and Co. of London, and Constable of Edinburgh, An. 1816, p. 45.

Hence every market was glutted with corn, and a general and excessive fall of prices took place over the whole island.

2. This fall was certainly increased by the importation of foreign corn, though not to the extent that many suppose. The total importation for the years 1813 and 1814, and nine months of 1815, did not exceed 1,780,000 quarters of grain of all descriptions; this is at the rate of only 54,000 quarters per month, or 648,000 quarters per annum. But if it consisted entirely of wheat, (which was not the case), it would only have been six quartern loaves, or 26lb. of bread, to each individual in Great Britain; and could never have had the astonishing effect, of reducing the home price of wheat more than 50 per cent[1]. Such an addition, however, brought from countries where grain was cheap, and which could be sold at prices, lower than the expence of raising that commodity in Great Britain, joined to the apprehension of still greater importations, must have had the effect of deterring speculators, or middle men, from purchasing grain *of domestic growth*, by which its price at market must necessarily have been lowered.

3. The great cause, however, of the reduced price, not only of grain, but of every species of agricultural production, was, *scarcity of money*. The public loan of 1815, was much greater than usual, and being contracted for on low terms, nearly the whole floating money in the country was vested in purchasing shares of it. Every shilling that could be procured, was likewise employed in purchasing stock, from the idea, that the funds would rise, as the consequence of a general peace. From these concurring circumstances, the country bankers became scarce of money, and found it necessary to curtail their circulation, or to les-

[1] Brown's Letters on the Distressed State of Agriculturists, p. 41.

sen their discounts; while in many districts these bankers had either failed, or their notes were discredited. An idea was also spread abroad, that the Bank restriction would be soon discontinued. Owing to a concurrence of these circumstances, circulation in the country was in a great measure annihilated, and when the farmers brought their grain or their cattle to market, buyers were not to be met with, except on the most reduced terms. It is calculated that more than one half of the crop raised in 1815, was sold by the farmer at $\frac{4}{5}$ths of the sum expended in producing it.[1]

4. When to a superfluity of produce; to the importation of foreign grain; and to a scarcity of money; the pressure of heavy taxation, including poor-rates, and other parochial and provincial charges, was added, the ruin of the agricultural interests can easily be accounted for. The presure of taxation was not felt, when circulation was abundant, and when every article brought to market could be disposed of without loss, and generally with profit; but when the reverse came to be the case, the necessary consequences were mischievous in the extreme. The tax-gatherer would not postpone his payment because the farmer would not procure a fair price for his commodities. They must be sold *at any price*, to pay his demand. The multitude of industrious farmers, in this manner either reduced to poverty, or brought to ruin, probably far exceeds what is commonly imagined; and had not the prices improved a little in the course of the present year, the number would have increased to an extent, that would have alarmed the most callous.

2. *Causes of our Commercial Distresses.*—These are partly to be attributed to various subordinate causes, which shall be explained in an Appendix, but none of which would either have taken place, or had any decided influence, had the system of *abundant circulation* been maintained.

[1] See Brown's Letters, &c. p. 44.

This doctrine has recently been enforced by an author, who unites great ability, to a practical knowledge of commercial subjects[1]. His opinion is, "That ten millions of additional Bank-notes, supplied in the spring of 1813, would have kept up the full employment of the general labourers throughout the country, whilst it would have furnished ample means of additional employment to the soldiers and artificers discharged by the peace. There would then have been no difficulty in collecting taxes, and no repining at paying them. But we have suffered our circulation to stagnate, and to shrink into a compass unequal to continue the reward of industry; our lands to become waste, and our manufactories to become desolate; and the whole country to be converted into a work-house, filled with mourning and discontent, when a trifling addition to the circulating medium, supplied in time, would have arrested these fatal symptoms of deficient circulation[2]."

6. *On restoring a Circulation in Coin, and abolishing the Bank Restriction.*

It is a most unfortunate circumstance, that when the nation is brought to such a state of pecuniary distress, by a diminished circulation, an idea should be entertained, that any advantage can be derived, or any relief obtained, by restoring a circulation in coin. Instead of diminishing, it will augment the evil. With justice is it asked, "of what

[1] See "Prosperity Restored;" or Reflections on the Cause of the Public Distresses, and on the only means of relieving them. By Thomas Atwood, Esq. of Birmingham. Published by Baldwin and Co. Paternoster Row. "The Remedy," or Thoughts on our Present Distresses, is written by the same author. These pamphlets should be read by every one, who wishes to be thoroughly master of those important discussions.

[2] Prosperity Restored, p. 48, and 49.

consequence is payment in specie, if we can effect our exchanges upon more easy and steady relations without it? For a childish partiality of this sort, ought the great interests of the nation to be sacrificed? Or, will any one seriously maintain, *that for such an object, we ought to have endured a hundredth part of the sufferings we have unfortunately experienced?*"[1]

Let us recollect how much the wealth, the strength, and the resources of Great Britain, have continually developed themselves, more and more, since the Bank restriction first took place, increasing, almost in a geometrical ratio, every year during the war. If that system had been kept up, as it might have been, none of our present difficulties would have been felt.[2] No man will contend, that this nation could have made such gigantic efforts during the last twenty-five years, and have flourished as it did, had it not been for our paper system: and if we flourished under it *in war*, what reason can be assigned for our not flourishing under it *in peace?* In fact, we had got into *an artificial state*, and if upon the return of peace it was thought more expedient that we should return to *a natural state*, the change ought to have been very *slowly* and *cautiously* effected, as sudden alterations are as fatal in the political, as in other respects.[3] There was nothing wrong in the former system; but we suffered it to fall, and we now throw the blame upon that system under which we flourished.[4] In fact, it was not going from a state of war to that of peace, but from a state of abundant to that of diminished circulation, which has occasioned all our difficulties.

As to the return of payment in specie, it is quite a delusion. The Bank may pay in gold, with perfect ease, in times of confidence and prosperity; but it is morally impossible for the country to keep within it, a sufficient

[1] Prosperity Restored, p. 6.
[2] Prosperity Restored, p. 209.
[3] Ditto, p. 15.
[4] Ditto, p. 176.

quantity of bullion for any general demand, or to pay all the notes, bills of exchange, and other obligations which are kept constantly afloat, to transact the immense business which the agricultural and commercial interests of this country require. Upon the least alarm, therefore, the restriction must be again resorted to; and in the interim, when an addition to our circulation is imperiously demanded, to save the country from destruction, its amount will be diminished.

Before the fatal step of abolishing the Restriction is finally authorized, let the Directors of the Bank of England be examined at the Bar of both Houses, as to the amount of Notes they can venture to circulate under that change of system.

Let us next consider, whether any effectual remedies can be applied, to arrest *the progress* of national calamity; for what we have endured, is nothing, compared to the cala-
change mities with which we are still threatened.

7. *The Remedies to be applied for Relieving Public Distress, and Restoring our National Prosperity.*

In all cases of public calamity, no effectual remedy can be obtained, but through the medium of careful inquiry. The real causes of distress must be fully ascertained, before any such remedy can be provided. It is the more necessary at present, as the public at large are not sufficiently aware, that a scarcity of circulation is the principal source of the miseries they now experience. Nor is there any other means, by which, either the facts that will prove it, can be so well brought forward, nor the advantages of the remedies that may be judged necessary, can be so clearly pointed out, as through the medium of Committees of both Houses, and the publication of their reports.

The appointment, therefore, of one or two Committees, "to inquire into the state of the circulation of the country, and the means of establishing it on the most advantageous footing for the public prosperity," is the best foundation for any measure to be adopted. It was in consequence of the Reports of Select Committees, that the pecuniary distresses of former times were alleviated; and a similar result may now be expected, by following the same system.

The advantages of an investigation by a respectable Committee are various: 1. Many important facts will be ascertained, which would never otherwise be brought to light; 2. The subject will be discussed in the Committee, and the materials for a judicious decision prepared, previous to its being brought under the consideration of the House; and, 3. The measures proposed will be considered, not as the jobs of a minister, but the result of a careful and impartial investigation, by those who can have no object in view, but the public advantage.

If such Committees were appointed, the first object of investigation naturally would be, 1. The amount of circulation at different periods since the commencement of the late war, to the present period, and its nature; 2. The effects which appear to have resulted from an increased circulation; 3. Whether the public distresses have arisen from diminished circulation, and to what extent; and, 4. What is the proper system, in regard to circulation and currency, to be adopted in future.

A most unfortunate idea is entertained, that matters should be let alone; that the evil will cure itself; nay, it is said, that things are mending, and will soon come round, without Parliamentary interference. Let us not, however, trust the fate of a great nation, and the future happiness of every individual in it, to such speculations. Let at least the solidity of such doctrines *be proved* before an impartial and

intelligent Committee, and not taken for granted without proof. If carefully inquired into, it will appear, that the evil has taken too deep root to be removed by palliatives; and that great measures, or "*Coups d'Etat*," are necessary for the safety and interests of the public[1].

Among the remedies likely to be recommended, if Committees of Inquiry were appointed by Parliament, the following will probably be found the most deserving of attention: 1. Continuing the Bank Restriction for a definite period; 2. Augmenting the number of Bank of England Notes; and, 3. Placing provincial circulation on a safe and solid foundation.

1. In the present state of the country, abolishing the restriction on the Bank of England, would be *opening the box of Pandora*, from the destructive consequences that would result from it. How can the Bank continue a circulation of even twenty-four millions (its amount on the 8th day of January, 1816), with such a check to its operations? With common prudence, the Directors cannot exceed from twelve to fifteen millions. Will any reflecting mind contemplate without shuddering, the effects of such a reduction? What have been the consequences of the diminution in our circulation, which has already taken place? Have not the the taxes become unproductive, and our expenditure so much exceeded our revenue, that a pinching economy is enforced in all the departments of the state; the splendor of the Crown has been eclipsed; and numbers of those brave men who triumphed at Waterloo, at Trafalgar, and a multitude of other places, have been discharged with a pre-

[1] Mr. Atwood justly remarks, (Prosperity Restored, p. 204), that making *money cheap*, necessarily makes *property dear*, and thus in an instant turns the current of the public fears, and restores confidence and credit. This promotes production and consumption, and every thing else on which national prosperity depends.

cipitancy, as if they were public nuisances, and not the renowned supporters of the national fame and glory.

But it may be said, are we never to have a coin circulation? The proper answer is, "*never, till we can have it with safety;*" and that can never be the case, until the national debt is reduced to the amount of at least from one to two hundred millions, and the taxes diminished to the extent of at least ten millions per annum. Even then it would be a dangerous experiment, but at the present moment it would be *suicidical.* An Act continuing the Restriction until these events take place, would revive confidence, and would enable the Bank to act without the dread of disgrace or ruin, if it endeavoured to restore matters to its former prosperous state.

2. It is not only necessary, however, to keep up the amount of our existing circulation, but to create an additional issue of money. A country, as has been already proved, can never be happy or prosperous, without an abundant circulation, more especially when subjected to an immense load of taxation. It would not be too much, if the Bank of England were to extend its circulation to *thirty-five millions.* It is justly remarked by an author whose opinions are the result of experience, that local assistance to any particular trade, will be of little avail. It may have the effect of maintaining its workmen for a few months longer, but by whom are the articles they produce to be consumed? But when *a general assistance to all trades throughout the country,* is afforded, (which the Bank, with a more extended circulation, either directly or indirectly, would be the means of supplying), as all trades are consumers of each other's article, consumption, as well as production are promoted, and industry would universally flourish[1].

3. The establishment of country banks, has certainly

[1] Prosperity Restored, p. 183.

greatly promoted the agricultural improvement of the country. The farmer was thus furnished with capital at his door, in the same manner as the merchant formerly was, to which the prosperity of commerce was greatly owing. Nothing, however, could be more injudicious, than to permit any one to issue notes, payable to the bearer on demand, licensed for a trifle, and sanctioned by a public stamp. The bankruptcy of multitudes of these issuers of notes, has done infinite mischief, and thrown a slur on the system of paper circulation, to which, under proper regulations, it is not liable.

The wisdom of Parliament, if directed to that object, would soon discover the means, by which solidity and safety could be given to circulation *in the country*, by the establishment of branches of the Bank of England, or by the formation of county banks, or by requiring adequate security from those who acted as country bankers.

It may perhaps be urged as an objection, that these measures are unnecessary, for that consumption must precede circulation, and that the former will always create the latter. It is, however, quite the reverse. Put money into people's pockets, and they will consume. It might as well be said, that a river may be rendered navigable without water, as that goods will be bought, where circulation is deficient.

It may likewise be said, that an increased issue of Bank Notes is merely a stimulus, which may arrest our sufferings for a moment, but cannot restore us to health. The answer, however, is obvious. Why should not the experiment be tried? Should not bread be given to the hungry, and physic to the sick? What other remedy can be applied, but augmented circulation; and, subjected as we are to real evils, unparalleled in the history of the nation, should not *an attempt at least be made to alleviate them?* Such stimu-

lants have answered effectually on former occasions. Read the Reports of the Commissioners to whom the management of public loans were entrusted, at periods of great public difficulty, and every doubt must vanish.[1]

On the whole, there is every reason to hope, that if the measures above recommended, were adopted, the state of the country would rapidly change, from a situation of alarming distress to one of a very different description. By the proposed additions to our circulating medium, any stagnation in the progress either of our commerce, manufactures, or agriculture, would be prevented; the revenue would become productive; the price of stocks would rise; money would become accessible at a moderate rate of interest; local improvements would be carried on with spirit: and the country would once more exhibit an uninterrupted scene of prosperity.

[1] Nothing could be more deplorable than the situation of this country, in regard to credit and confidence, in April and May 1793. The whole mercantile world seemed on the brink of bankruptcy. No money could be borrowed by private individuals, on almost any terms; and the evil had become so great, that no mode of relief was supposed to be practicable. Most fortunately, government was prevailed upon to adopt a plan of lending Exchequer Bills to the commercial interest; and, *as if by magic*, all their difficulties instantaneously vanished; yet, incredible as it may now appear, the sum which produced such astonishing effects amounted only to 2,202,000*l.* By that inconsiderable advance, in the words of the Report of the Commissioners, "Confidence in commercial transactions *was speedily restored*; a facility in raising money *was presently felt*, not only in the metropolis, but through the whole extent of Great Britain; the difficulties in which some considerable commercial houses were involved, were thus removed; a number of eminent manufacturers, in different parts of the kingdom, who had in a great degree suspended their works, were enabled to resume them, and to afford employment to their workmen, who must otherwise have been thrown upon the public for support;" and all this was effected, not only without expense, but with a profit of upwards of 4000*l.* which was paid into the Exchequer! After such a result, can the utility of such measures be now questioned?

APPENDIX.

On the Subordinate Causes of our Commercial Distresses.

AGRICULTURE, manufactures, and commerce, are dependent on each other. The one cannot suffer without the others feeling the effects. The ruin of agriculture palsies trade; while on the other hand, when manufactures and commerce fall off, the farmer necessarily wants a market for his productions. The causes, therefore, which have produced our present *commercial embarrassments* is a subject universally interesting. They are principally owing to the diminished amount of our circulation; but they may likewise be partly attributed to the following circumstances:—1. The cessation of war;—2. The impoverished state of foreign countries;—3. The competition of foreign manufactures;—4. The vast emigration of British subjects to foreign parts;—5. The deplorable situation of the Spanish Colonies;—6. The want of efficient treaties of commerce with foreign powers; and, 7. The deficiency in the home market, occasioned by the distressed state of agriculture.

1. It cannot be doubted, that a state of war is favourable to some branches of trade, to some articles of manufactures, and even to the agriculture of particular districts[1]. For instance, the commerce with Russia for hemp; the importation of wood for the navy; the manufacture of cannons, shells, musquets, sail-cloth, &c. for the navy and army; and the immense demand for provisions of all sorts for our sailors and soldiers, and food for the horses employed in the public service, (in which there is also much waste), all these occasioned an immense circulation, the want of which could not be otherwise than severely felt when the demand was withdrawn. To a certain degree, the same revulsion must be felt at the termination of every war, but more so at the close of the last, from its longer duration, and the vast scale on which it was conducted.

2. The late tremendous war, brought on such a train of calamities on Europe, as it had never before experienced. Not only were indivi-

[1] The cessation of war was injurious to agriculture only locally, where the supplies were purchased for the navy and army.

duals plundered by a ruthless soldiery, but governments were systematically loaded with the severest exactions; every species of industry was paralyzed, and commerce checked, either by exorbitant duties, or by a total prohibition. The consequence of such oppressive measures was, poverty in the extreme: which cannot be recovered for many years, and in the interim, foreign markets will not require such extensive supplies as formerly.

3. It was a favourite object with Buonaparte, to establish manufactures on the Continent, competent to supply the demand, without depending on British industry. For that purpose, the emigration of British manufacturers, with their machinery, was promoted. At Rouen, in the neighbourhood of Lisle, and at Ghent, cotton manufactures were established to a considerable extent, and brought to a great degree of perfection. Woollen manufactures were carried on in Saxony: and the cloth produced there, was, after the peace, (I regret to add) preferred in Flanders to British fabrics. Attempts were also made, to establish various sorts of manufactures in Russia; in short, the whole Continent seemed bent upon the same plan, that of manufacturing for themselves and their neighbours, to the exclusion of British industry. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that we should feel severely so formidable a competition.

4. The endless emigration of British subjects, must also be severely felt by those who manufacture goods for domestic consumption. Not only the demands of these emigrants and their families are wanted; but also of all those, who either directly, or circuitously, were benefited by them. Abroad, these emigrants consume nothing but foreign manufactures; and if they shall return, will bring that taste with them, and promote it as a fashion. *The French cannot account for this emigration, except on the idea, that we are on the brink of a revolution here, from the horrors of which these emigrants are anxious to escape.* The mischiefs that will be done, if this migratory system continue, are incalculable. The resources of the country will be expended in the enrichment of foreign nations; the revenue will be seriously affected; British honour and probity will be exchanged for foreign tinsel: and above all, numbers of the rising generation will be trained, not only with a prejudice against their native language, customs, constitution, morality, and religion, but will be bred up, and the females in particular, in the greatest dissoluteness of manners, and laxity of conduct. What taxes ought not to be exacted from those, who wantonly abandon their native country in such a crisis as the present? and who waste, in the purchase of foreign luxuries, what was raised

by the labours of the British peasant; and which ought, on every principle of justice, to be expended in the preservation and the encouragement of domestic industry?

5. One great cause of our present commercial distresses, is to be attributed to the present deplorable situation of the Spanish Colonies; where we might otherwise have had twelve millions and a half of useful customers. Without entering into the policy of rendering the Spanish Colonies Independent States, we might have insisted on the privilege of trafficking with them directly from this country. In that respect, at least, there ought to have been an end put to Spanish monopoly: this would have been but a small compensation for all the blood and treasure we expended in the preservation of Spanish Independence, and emancipating the Peninsula from the grasp of France.[1]

6. The want of efficient treaties of commerce with foreign powers, is another great source of our commercial embarassments. It ought to be a resolution in Parliament, that no minister shall presume to propose any loan, subsidy, or grant of money whatever, in favour of any power, *with whom we had not commercial relations.* Had such a system been enforced from the beginning of the revolutionary war, our trade would not have suffered to the extent it has. When a pecuniary boon is granted to a foreign power, it is infatuation in the extreme, not to require some compensation; for experience proves, that repayment need never be expected.

7. But the great cause of our manufacturing and commercial distresses at this time is, the diminished demand of the home market, in consequence of the depressed state of agriculture, by which a difference is made, to the annual amount of from eighty to ninety millions sterling, in the demand for, and purchase of goods. Our manufacturers and merchants ought now to be aware, that by their violent attacks on the landed and farming interests, they were in fact endeavouring to destroy those very customers, on whose prosperity they principally

[1] The government of France justified the countenance it gave to the resistance of North America, to the claims of Great Britain, in the following terms:

Extract from the Manifesto of His Most Christian Majesty, published at Paris, An. 1779.

His Majesty gave the King of England plainly to understand, that he neither was, nor did he pretend to be, a judge of the disputes with his Colonies; much less would it become his Majesty to avenge his (the King of England's) quarrels: that in consequence, his Majesty was under no obligation to treat the Americans as rebels, to exclude them from his ports, or to prohibit all commercial intercourse with his subjects.—(*Annual Register*, an. 1779, p. 301, State Papers). The same reasoning would now justify our supporting the independence of Spanish America.

depended. *A trifling addition to the price of bread, was nothing compared to the advantage, of having a demand for the goods they dealt in, from those on whose property, or by whose industry that bread was raised.* Thousands of dealers, the profit of whose sales will hardly pay the taxes to which they are liable, should now be ready to admit the justness of that position.

It were much to be wished, for resolving all these questions of internal policy, that the real internal state of the country were more accurately known than is the case at present. As a nation becomes more populous, it is necessary to ascertain a number of particulars, of less importance in early periods of society, but which afterwards cannot be too minutely investigated; for it is not so easy to govern fifteen as five millions of inhabitants. Upon this principle, the statistics of China have been brought to a degree of perfection, of which we have scarcely an idea in Europe; and without which, such an immense population could not be governed, or kept together. The inquiries which have been made there, have been conducted with the greatest minuteness, and have been extended to 300 volumes. Every mandarin, or governor of a city or province, is enjoined to make himself master of all that relates to his department; and if he cannot answer *any question* put to him by the Emperor, regarding the state of the district he governs, he is dismissed from his office. By means of such inquiries, carried on in this country, we should know exactly the number of those employed in manufactures for domestic as well as foreign markets, and the importance of the former would become more apparent. The principle would then be established, that trade and manufactures cannot prosper, if agriculture be oppressed, or the demands of the home market materially diminished.

SUGGESTIONS

FOR THE

PREVENTION AND MITIGATION

OF

Epidemic and Pestilential Diseases,

COMPREHENDING

THE ABOLITION

OF

QUARANTINES AND LAZARETTOS:

WITH

SOME OPPORTUNE REMARKS

UPON THE

DANGER OF PESTILENCE FROM SCARCITY.

INTENDED

TO SERVE AS AN INTRODUCTION TO A WORK, ENTITLED

RESEARCHES IN TURKEY,

CONCERNING THE PLAGUE, &c.

BY CHARLES MACLEAN, M. D.

LECTURER ON THE DISEASES OF HOT CLIMATES TO THE HONOURABLE EAST-INDIA COMPANY.

LONDON:

1817.

PREFACE.

We hear, every where, of pestilential diseases; but we hear no where, of their true cause. To dissipate the dreadful delusions, which prevail upon the subject—to assign their true cause, and to promulgate an efficient method of cure, are the principal objects of a work which I am preparing for publication, according to the notice contained in the following pages.

But, in the mean time, it would not be justifiable in persons, who, like myself, have given their attention to the subject, to remain silent under the very alarming symptoms of progressive scarcity which pervade the world, and when several countries are actually afflicted with pestilence, arising in a great measure from that source.

An article, which appeared in the public journals of the 15th instant, under the head of Vienna, of the 28th of December last, has the following statement: "According to accounts from the Turkish frontiers, there are still appearances of the plague in some parts of Bosnia, Servia, and Bulgaria. In Moldavia it has spread so much, that, in October last, few parts of the country were free from it. In November, it even shewed itself at Jafry, the capital; and as the symptoms became frequent there, all the Consuls left the city, and, since that time, *all intercourse with the city is interrupted.* In Wallachia, they are more fortunate: that province has not only remained free from the plague, but *the harvest has been most abundant.* The cordon which Austria has formed in the Buckowina towards Moldavia, and which has lately been so much strengthened, *will suffice, we hope, to preserve our frontiers from the infection.*"

To deprecate our having recourse, in the event of a pestilence in this country, to measures so absurd and injurious, is, in part, the object of this publication.

The effect of this melancholy delusion is to increase mortality, and to aggravate disease, at least in a fourfold degree, by obliging

the people to remain exposed to the influence of the atmosphere, which is the principal cause of the disease, and by restricting access to the means of subsistence, scarcity being its most powerful auxiliary cause,-as well as in various other ways, which cannot be enumerated here.

That the want of a regular and abundant supply of the means of subsistence, is a very powerful cause of plague, in the countries mentioned, shall be elsewhere shewn. It is seldom that an affluent native, at least among the Turkish population, and very rarely, indeed, that an Englishman, is affected with plague in the Levant.

When, in the year 1758, a scarcity existed in England, which was considered not real, but artificial, and which did not affect other countries nearly in the same proportion as at present, it was thought necessary, by Sir Richard Manningham, a physician of London, to call the attention of the public to the dangers of an impending pestilence:—"The plague of pestilence," says he, "may be much sooner produced in this nation, by an artificial famine, than by any infection of the plague itself from foreign parts."[1]

If such apprehensions were justly entertained respecting the effects that might have arisen from a scarcity which was only artificial, local, and temporary; how much greater ought our apprehensions to be from a scarcity threatening to become real, general, and of long duration!

But whether famine arise from a real or artificial scarcity, or from a want of the means of procuring subsistence, or from a combination of these circumstances, the effect is precisely the same; the pestilence ensuing would be also of the same nature; and to augment the abundance of the articles of subsistence, or of the means of procuring them, would in all cases be the proper remedy.

Hence all measures which, in giving an artificial support to particular classes, tend to narrow the supply, or to keep up the price of the necessaries of life, must operate directly against the welfare of the great bulk of the community; and, under existing circumstances, augment the already afflicting miseries of the people.

Not only, therefore, should such measures be avoided, but all those means should be resorted to by which the abundance of the articles of subsistence, and of the means of procuring them, can be augmented, especially encouragement to importation, and the establishment of public granaries: the former, as the most efficient remedy against a real, the latter, against an artificial scarcity.

[1] Vide Discourse concerning the Plague, &c. title page. In the Preface, p. 1, he calls it, "A most notorious *artificial* scarcity: for 'tis known," he adds, "that we have bread corn more than enough in our nation for the full supply of all the people."

To abolish, or if that be thought too much, to suspend quarantine, is one of the means which I would recommend in order to facilitate the importation of grain, flour, rice, Indian corn, or other articles of subsistence, from countries supposed to be the seat of those diseases for the prevention of which quarantines have been established; as the ports of the Black Sea, and of the Mediterranean, and the West Barbary, on the Atlantic Ocean. In Egypt, and, probably, in others of these countries, the harvest has been this year particularly abundant. But if these sources were overflowing, and the people of this country starving, they could not be rendered available under the existence of the mischievous laws of quarantine.

If the evil of scarcity should happily be only temporary, no general detriment can arise from acting as if it were to be permanent; whilst, if it should prove permanent, by acting as if it were only to be temporary, a great part of the community, either by the direct effect of famine, or through the intervention of a pestilence, might be destroyed.

I shall probably be excused for hazarding these hints by all who are duly impressed with the fact, that the times and circumstances are of an aspect most serious, and require something much beyond the application of palliatives and placebos.

In tracing to a papal stratagem the origin of the doctrine, to which we owe so great a proportion of the mortality incidental to epidemic diseases, no liberal Roman Catholic will, I am persuaded, suspect me of wishing to disparage his religion. This would be as unreasonable as it would be to impute to me a predilection for the tenets of the Mahommedans or Hindoos, because I consider their opinion of the non-existence of contagion, in epidemic diseases, as beneficial and true.

London, 4, Bouverie Street, Fleet street,
22d January, 1817.

SUGGESTIONS,

&c.

It has justly been remarked, by one of the most recent writers upon the Turkish Empire, that "the experience of so many ages, respecting the nature of the Plague, is limited to a knowledge of its symptoms, and of its fatal effects.[1]"

A similar observation has been, with equal truth, extended, by an ingenious and candid writer, of much experience, among ourselves, to epidemic maladies in general; "We know no more of epidemical diseases, or their causes," says he, "than the inhabitants of Soldania.[2]"

These authors are only not correct, in that they have not gone far enough. Relative to this most interesting and most important subject of human research, involving, as it does, the fate of at least a million of our fellow-creatures annually, our condition is much worse than a state of absolute ignorance. We have unfortunately wandered so long, and so far, into the regions of error, that, to recover our lost way, has now become our first indispensable labour. We must unlearn all that we have been hitherto learning: we must transpierce mountains of consecrated delusion, before we can even enter the right path of investigation.

It is, probably, not unknown to the public, that I last year[3] em-

[1] "L'expérience de tant de siècles, sur la nature de ce mal, se borne donc à la connaissance des symptômes qui l'annoncent, et de ses funestes effets."—*Tableau Général de l'Empire Othoman, par Mr. M. D'Ohsson*, tom. ii. §. vi.

[2] A Treatise on Tropical Diseases. By B. Moseley, M. D. 4th edit. p. 638.

[3] In the autumn of 1815.

ployed myself in investigating the Plague, and in treating cases of that malady, in the Greek Hospital, near the Seven Towers, at Constantinople.

So peculiar an experience, embracing also that of the progress, and cure, of the disease, in my own person, will, perhaps, be admitted to confer upon my observations, respecting pestilential affections, a degree of authority, which they could not derive, either from superior talents, or eminent station.

But I would not be understood, from thence, to claim for my doctrines any credit; and it were well for science if none were ever accorded, beyond what is due to strict demonstration. All that I request of the reader, is, that he will not refuse his assent to my conclusions, unless he can shew them not to be logical inferences; or deny the correctness of my results, until he shall have ascertained, that similar processes, conducted under similar circumstances, do not produce similar effects.

Epidemic diseases, from their greater number, as well as their greater severity, naturally take precedence of all other maladies. In proportion as they are more fatal, the discussions, which relate to them, are of superior importance. The subject even derives additional solemnity from the profound ignorance of their nature, which still continues to prevail; and they will be found, besides, to possess an interest, derived from adventitious circumstances, altogether singular and extraordinary, which distinguishes them from every other human ailment.

Opinions, respecting their cause, which have arisen in the progress of society, and in Christian countries now almost universally prevail, not only have the effect, by augmenting terror, and diminishing, or rendering precarious the means of subsistence, and the attendance upon the sick, of increasing, in an almost incredible ratio, mortality and disease; but are, in many other respects, productive of extensively injurious consequences to the best interests of mankind.

And, what may be regarded as still more singular and extraordinary, these influential opinions are not only palpably erroneous, but of fraudulent origin, and of modern date.

The object, then, of the work which I contemplate, respecting epidemic and pestilential diseases, and which is actually in a state of forward preparation, is to promulgate principles, by the general application of which, besides considerations of humanity and of science, the population and the revenues of states may be increased; or, what amounts to the same thing, their ordinary waste may be diminished in a degree, which, *prima facie*, might almost exceed belief.

But, as it would not be fitting, that results, which are deemed of such high importance, should be presented to the public in an imperfect state; and, as it may be yet some time before I am enabled to complete my plan; I conceive it may, in the interim, be useful towards promoting discussion, by which alone truth can be fully elicited, and finally established, to call the attention of the public, by means of this notice of the fruits of my investigation, to a subject no less remarkable for its importance, than for the neglect with which it has hitherto been treated, and the consequent obscurity in which it remains involved.

There are, besides, in the actual state of the world, and especially of this country, some circumstances which lead me to think, that it may possibly be of service that I should not delay to make known at least some of the most prominent features of the results of my investigation concerning epidemic diseases.

These are portentous times. Discontent and scarcity are abroad; and famine, with its usual concomitant, pestilence, *may* follow.

Nor let me be reproached with endeavouring unnecessarily, to excite alarm. If the danger be but imaginary, the speculation will be harmless: the prophecy of the end of the world destroyed only a few crazy tenements. But, if it should prove real, to anticipate, if it cannot repel, is at least to break the force of the calamity.

My apprehension of the possibility of the occurrence of an epidemic disease in this country, arises from the prospect of a general scarcity throughout Europe; and the doubts that may rationally be entertained, whether any measures within the compass of our power may be adequate to obviate the consequences, in this respect, of the varied and extensive evils which either exist, or are impending. Let us not conceal from ourselves that it is not the pressure of the present moment only against which we have to guard. Considering, indeed, the deplorable state of the agricultural prospects of this country as connected with those of some other nations, and the unsettled state of all, it would be both unreasonable and pusillanimous not to anticipate, that, unless some very material improvement speedily happen, upon which we have no right to calculate, scarcity and distress, and consequently the probability of famine and disease, may be even greater the next and the following, than it is this year.[1]

The body being prepared by famine for falling into disease, a slight deterioration of the atmosphere would be sufficient to

[1] We hear alarming accounts of scarcity from almost every quarter: from Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, France, and the Netherlands. We *feel* it at home. Nor does the message of the American President, Mr. Maddison, to both Houses of Congress, which has just been received, give any promise of a superabundance beyond the Atlantic. It is not by shutting our eyes against danger that we can hope to avert it.

produce an epidemic malady. It consequently depends upon the casual diminution of the purity of the air, (and it is of the greatest importance to note, that contagion can have nothing to do with the matter,[1]) whether we are to be afflicted with this additional calamity.

When we become acquainted with the true causes, as well principal as subordinate or collateral, upon which epidemic diseases depend, and with the nature of the adventitious causes (the consequences of the belief in the doctrine of contagion) which multiply their destructive effects, we shall readily perceive the reason why it would not be safe for any nation, even the most cultivated, and consequently, other things being equal, the least liable to those scourges, to consider itself as permanently exempt from the recurrence of pestilential maladies.[2]

In countries far advanced in civilization and culture, indeed, it is seldom that the inferior or collateral causes of epidemic diseases, as famine, &c. occur with any considerable force; and, under these circumstances, it requires the presence of the principal cause, (which I shall prove, but, for the present, assume to be a deteriorated state of the atmosphere,) operating, in a high degree, to produce such pestilences as those which afflicted England in the course of the seventeenth century.

Hence, for the last hundred and fifty years, although there have been many obscure epidemics, as the bills of mortality enable me to infer, which, however, have not been noted as such, we have, in this country, remained exempt from any palpable or destructive pestilence.[3] And whilst it must be admitted, that the chances are, according to the same principles, greatly in favour of the continuance, with very rare interruption, of this happy exemption; it is, however, no less obvious, that the subordinate or collateral causes being, as at present, operating with unusual force, a slighter measure of the principal cause than under ordinary circumstances, would be sufficient to produce the deprecated effect.

It is the part of wisdom to be prepared for every event. And

[1] It would seem as if medical writers had no other idea of the cause of fever than contagion, or marsh *miasma*. When we come to investigate the true cause of epidemic diseases, these will be found to be *almost* equally imaginary. It will, then, appear as absurd to talk of marsh *miasma, on the rock of Gibraltar*, or *on board a ship*, as to talk, *any where*, of contagion.

[2] I am here obliged, for the sake of illustration, to assume some things as known, which are only to be demonstrated in the work, announced in these pages. And, in the mean time, I have to request that the reader will give me credit for being able to prove what I deliberately assert.

[3] I shall shew, that neither this long exemption, nor the repeated recurrence of plague in the seventeenth century, have depended, in any degree, upon the state of our intercourse with Turkey, or any other country, during these periods respectively.

if we are properly prepared for that, which I have supposed possible, by making ourselves acquainted beforehand with the true causes of epidemic diseases, and with the appropriate measures to be pursued for their alleviation, prevention, and cure, (concerning all of which the most destructive errors continue to prevail,) I will venture to affirm, that the mortality, to be apprehended from their intrinsic severity, need not be contemplated with terror.

The peculiar nature of my experience, perhaps, may be deemed to justify my speaking with some degree of confidence upon this important subject: and it assuredly would not be, upon any evidence short of demonstration, that I should permit myself to assert, in the most unqualified terms, that with the exception of those diseases, as small-pox and measles, which notoriously depend upon that source, there is no fever, nor any general disease in existence, that we know of, which is propagated by contagion.[1]

I have been led more at large into this train of observation, from having repeatedly perused, in the public journals, advertisements announcing the meeting of a *soi-disant* "Institution, for the cure, and prevention, of *contagious* fever, in the metropolis;" and by the desire to counteract the false and pernicious impression, that might be made upon the public mind by an annunciation of this nature, seeming to come from medical authority, if it were left freely to operate, in the event of any casual increase of sickness, in London, or others of our populous towns or cities.

But, it becomes of still greater moment, to endeavour to obviate the effects of this delusion, if it be true, as is generally understood, that the College of Physicians, who would of course be officially consulted, upon the occurrence of an epidemic malady in the metropolis, entertain, and would recommend measures conformable to the same belief.

Of the destructive consequences of acting upon these erroneous opinions, as well as that the opinions *are* erroneous, I rely that the proofs, which I am enabled to adduce, will be found convincing, and satisfactory. And, if so, it must be obvious, that if, in the event of a pestilence, advice should be given to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, founded upon the errors deprecated, (similaropinions have, if I be not misinformed, been recently communicated by the College to the Privy Council,) as was addressed to their predecessors, in 1665, by the then College of Physicians, the consequence would be, as it was at that period, to increase the otherwise inevitable mortality, at least four-fold.[2] There would be two hundred thousand deaths, instead of fifty thousand.

[1] Typhus, upon which the changes have been so incessantly rung by the advocates for contagion, will be shewn to be as incapable of propagating itself as gout or dropsy.

[2] Vide Directions for the Cure of the Plague, by the College of Physicians, and Orders by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, published 1665.

The advantages of discussing and deciding the question respecting their cause, whilst we are free from the terror and confusion incidental to the presence of epidemic maladies, is rendered manifest by a single consideration. During the plague of London in 1665, that of Marseilles in 1720, and indeed those of all other cities, in which the belief in contagion has prevailed, a great proportion of the sickness and mortality was obviously occasioned by scarcity, from the impossibility of obtaining a regular and sufficient supply of provisions, owing entirely to the influence of this unfounded belief.

The deaths in London, from plague only, in 1665, were estimated at one hundred thousand, upon grounds which there is no good reason to consider as exaggerated, although the bills of mortality did not state quite so many. The population being now double of what it was at that period, a similar state of the atmosphere being given, (for I shall prove that such was the cause of that epidemic,) and the belief in contagion, with all its desolating train of consequences, being operating with equal force, the mortality would be double also.

Hence, it cannot fail to be of the most essential importance, in the event of so calamitous an occurrence happening even in the smallest degree, that the public should be made aware, that, independent of all medical treatment, and of proper means of prevention, three fourths at least of the mortality, which would otherwise happen, may be obviated, merely by avoiding all the mistaken measures, which have been usually pursued, under similar circumstances, arising out of an *hypothesis* palpably erroneous.

That epidemic diseases do not depend upon contagion, then, shall be demonstrated, by proofs, positive, negative, analogical, circumstantial, and *ad absurdum*.

With respect to the origin of this erroneous opinion, which was altogether uknown to the ancient physicians, it may be considered not a little curious, that it should have been first promulgated, as a *pious fraud*, about the middle of the 16th century, by the legates of Pope Paul III, at the Council of Trent; and that it should have since been propagated, and spread, and now exists, by faith, dread, and fiction only.

The prepossession in favour of the *hypothesis* of contagion, arising from the erroneous opinion entertained of its antiquity, being thus destroyed, the question will be argued upon its proper merits.

To a papal stratagem solely, then, are we to attribute the destruction of lives, and the detriment to health, morals, medicine, commerce, navigation, the intercourse of nations, individual freedom, military operations, the general consumer, and the public revenues,

which I shall shew to have been occasioned by the consequences, directly or indirectly, of the *hypothesis* of contagion; besides the expenditure of immense sums of money, by all the nations of Christendom, *in instituting and maintaining establishments, that essentially contribute to increase mortality and disease.*[1]

The destruction of lives, alone, depending upon the pernicious measures founded upon them, I roundly estimate at nearly a million of persons annually, throughout the world, since the period at which they began to operate, in 1547; not to speak of constitutions ruined, and the miseries of poverty and want inflicted upon many millions more.

Nor will it fail to be regarded as a singular phænomenon, that the Turkish government alone, placed in the very *focus* of pestilence, should have had the wisdom and forbearance, as I shall shew it to be, to reject those fatal institutions, even when they were strongly urged to adopt them by a neighbouring power.[2]

[1] Quarantines, and other regulations of plague police, first established by the Venetians, are here alluded to. The plague having always been, as it now is, a frequent visitor of the territories of this state, they established, about the middle of the fifteenth century, an office, or council of health. Afterwards, when that disease had become contagious, by a decree of the Pope, and the Council of Trent, (and all good Catholics were bound implicitly to believe this doctrine,) a similar office was established in almost every village; and quarantines, lazarettos, and other regulations of plague police, multiplied along the banks of the Adriatic. They were adopted at Marseilles, in 1669, probably in consequence of the great plague of London. The regulations of Venice have served as models to Russia, Austria, and other states. Of the origin and progress of the belief upon which they have been founded, of its erroneousness, and of its numerous pernicious consequences, I shall give a full and explicit history.

[2] Some account will be given of the representations, which were made upon the occasion here alluded to, by the Cabinet of Vienna, to the Turkish Divan, through the medium of the Austrian Internuncio at Constantinople, Baron Sturmer, proposing the establishment of Quarantines in various parts of the Turkish dominions, as communicated to me by the venerable father of German physic, the justly celebrated Dr. Frank, counsellor of state, and, first physician to their Imperial Majesties of Russia, who assisted to draw up the regulations which were proposed for general adoption.

During the sitting of the Congress at Vienna, a memorial was presented to that body, by the Philanthropic German Physician, Count Harrach, recommending that the Allied Powers should embrace the opportunity of their assemblage, to obtain, by their conjoint representations, the consent of the Turkish Government, to institute similar measures of plague police, in their territories, with those entertained in other countries. This document shall appear in the narrative of my researches, the benevolent author having, with the liberality which distinguishes the true votary of science, favoured me with a copy of it, knowing that my opinions upon the subject were diametrically opposite to his own.

It is certainly very clear, that if the quarantines that exist are useful, they should be generally extended, and the plan of Count Harrach acted upon; whilst, if they are useless, or pernicious, as I maintain, they should be wholly abolished.

By some persons, who have considered the subject superficially, the frequent recurrence of plague in Turkey has been most absurdly imputed to the want of these establishments; since it will be found, that, wherever they have been adopted, instead of preventing, they have but increased mortality, and aggravated disease.

The establishments to which I here more particularly allude, are quarantines, and lazarettos. But every other measure of separation, seclusion, restriction or regulation, which comes under the denomination of plague police, should be considered as comprehended under the same head, and liable to the same objections.

Such are the measures, then, which I would most earnestly exhort my countrymen to reject, in the event of the occurrence, under our present, or impending distresses, of an epidemic malady, in whatever degree, among them; pledging myself, if they will examine with attention, and without prejudice or prepossession, the proofs and arguments which I shall offer for their perusal, to shew to their entire satisfaction, and by the most irrefragable demonstration, that epidemic diseases never depend upon contagion.

And whilst the intelligence, that a demonstration is about to appear, evincing that epidemic diseases never depend upon contagion, may tend to obviate the apprehensions, which, upon the occurrence, or even the rumour of the existence of such diseases, never fail to arise from the supposed danger of *infection*; it may also contribute, in no small degree, towards the same end, to be informed, that there are, in like manner, proofs in preparation, of an efficient method of cure.

In the narrative of my proceedings at the Greek Hospital, near the Seven Towers, besides some things, that will perhaps be deemed both curious and new, with respect to the nature, cause, prevention, and cure of plague, I shall have occasion to illustrate the obstacles which have hitherto prevented or impeded the investigation of epidemic maladies.

An account will be rendered of my correspondence with the Turkish Government, respecting the resumption of the investigation, upon my recovery from the plague; and their motives for not wishing to encourage measures tending to repress the devastations of that disease, as connected with religion, policy, and avarice, will be explained.

From the whole of the details, it will be rendered manifest, that, notwithstanding this disfavour, and the more active and dangerous hostility of the inferior agents of the plague institutions, my inquiry has been attended with a very complete success.

In order to prevent misapprehension, or misrepresentation, I think it right explicitly to declare, that, by complete success, I would be understood to mean, that I have, by unequivocal pro-

cases, invariably conducted by my personal agency, fully satisfied myself, not only that plague does not depend upon contagion, but that it is capable, by a mode of treatment, which I shall indicate, of being cured, in the proportion of at least four cases out of five of those presented, on or before the third day of the disease, in a pestilence of ordinary severity: conclusions which I am ready at any time to verify, in their full extent, to the satisfaction of others.

The system of *depôts* for the reception of persons ill of the plague, in order to disencumber their frightened relations, and from whence they are transferred to the burying-ground, as exemplified in the practice of that near the Seven Towers, at which I performed my experiments, shall be fully developed.

The progress, symptoms, and treatment of the disease, in my own person, shall be described.

And, finally, an account will be given of the means by which I have endeavoured to procure the immediate and general application to public use, of the principles deduced from my experiments.

The general results of my researches concerning epidemic diseases, may be thus summed up.

1. The nature of the obstacles which impede or prevent investigation, is explained; and the path, which, to myself, was full of thorns, rendered smooth to my successors.

2. The noted *hypothesis* of contagion is refuted.

3. Its fraudulent origin traced; and,

4. Its destructive consequences shewn.

5. The nature of epidemic diseases is illustrated, as deduced from their phenomena, and the results of the operation of remedies.

6. The doctrines concerning their cause, as laid down by Hippocrates and the ancient physicians, are, in their great outlines, but with certain modifications, adopted.

7. The means of prevention, and alleviation, are deduced from the nature of the cause.

8. An efficient method of cure is ascertained.

9. It is assumed that a million of persons die annually of epidemic diseases throughout the world.

10. Of this mortality, it is computed that fifteen-sixteenths are occasioned by the consequences of the belief in contagion; the absence of the means of prevention, which depend upon a knowledge of the cause; and the want of an efficient method of cure.

11. Consequently, the result of the general renunciation of this belief; of the general adoption of proper means of alleviation and prevention; and of the general application of an efficient method of cure; would be to save fifteen-sixteenths of a million, or

937,500 lives, annually, throughout the world: reducing the mortality from a million to 62,500, in one-sixteenth.

In whatever degree these principles might be applied, the saving of lives would be proportional.

The grounds upon which this computation has been made, shall be delineated hereafter. It does not pretend to any thing like accuracy. But whether it be excessive, or deficient, is immaterial, since that could not affect the validity of my general reasoning, or conclusions. The only difference would be in respect to the *quantum* of utility: and it cannot be alleged, that, in this instance, its *minimum* would not possess a sufficient degree of importance. If the proportions be even reversed, and the annual saving in lives, instead of 937,500, be estimated at only 62,500, the object will not cease to be worthy of being prosecuted.

12. From all which, it follows that it is an object of the highest interest and importance, that a plan, upon a scale of suitable magnitude, should be adopted, for the purposes of undeceiving the multitude, in all countries, respecting the desolating belief in contagion; of propagating a knowledge of the proper means of alleviation and prevention; and of effecting the general application of an efficient method of cure, in epidemic and pestilential diseases.

Of Plague Police Establishments.

These Institutions being founded upon the doctrine of contagion, are part of the destructive consequences of the belief in that *hypothesis* alluded to, under the fourth of the foregoing general heads, of the results of my researches. If this *hypothesis* were disproved, all question respecting the merits of these institutions would, of course, cease: but, whilst that object remains unaccomplished, it may, in the present state of knowledge respecting epidemic diseases, tend greatly to elucidate the subject; if, previous to coming in full collision with the whole mass of existing prejudices, it be shewn, that, upon the principles of the advocates for contagion themselves,

1. The laws of quarantine are absurd;

2. That plague police establishments are, in fact, inefficient for their object;

3. That they are injurious to health, navigation, and commerce;

4. And a source of great and pernicious expenditure.

Whether the measures which have been pursued, in order to prevent the propagation of supposed infection, consist of seclusion and confinement, in a house, lazaretto, ship, district, or town,

they are all of the same nature, differing only in degree and manner of restraint. The shutting up of houses, in which there are persons ill of the plague; drawing lines of circumvallation, and cordons of troops round cities, supposed to be infected; shooting the sick; and other measures of similar barbarity, of which I shall cite examples but too recent, are, I trust, already beginning to grow obsolete. And let us also hope, that it will be but a very short time before we see the detention of ships, goods, and persons, upon grounds which are either frivolous or chimerical, proscribed, as unsuitable to the spirit and intelligence of the age.

All the regulations of plague police may be represented by the general term

Quarantine.

Quarantine signifies the detention for forty days, as the term imports, in a state of exclusion from society, of persons, ships, goods, &c. supposed to be capable of propagating, by contact or contiguity, an infectious disease; forty days being presumed to be the period at which that capability ceases.

Although the periods vary, being sometimes more, and sometimes less than forty days, the name remains the same.

As quarantine is a measure in perpetual operation, whether there exist an epidemic disease or not, and even without the rumour of one, it becomes a consideration of more importance, in so far as its effects are distinct from those of other plague police measures, than the regulations which are only enforced in the event of actual pestilence.

Absurdity of the Quarantine Laws, even according to the Doctrine of Contagion.

Were the laws of quarantine in other respects well-founded, we might justly accuse them of having had more regard to the fears, than to the permanent interests of persons in health; whilst to the sick they have been cruel, pernicious, or destructive. Plague, in particular, has been assumed to be a disease necessarily fatal; and the measures which have been adopted upon its occurrence, have been well calculated to justify the assumption. In resolving upon means proper to arrest the progress of an evil, of which both the nature and the cause have been equally misunderstood, it appears as if the suggestions of alarm had been alone consulted. These regulations, one would think, must have been made by men in high

health, and never expecting that it might come to their turn to be afflicted with sickness; for they are the quintessence of abject fear and base selfishness. By the very precautions employed against their spreading, we find diseases, which might only be severe, rendered almost certainly mortal; and innocent or useful members, for having the misfortune to be seized with a dangerous malady, lopped off, like criminals, from the great body of society.[1]

That contagion is the cause of epidemic diseases, being, for the sake of the argument, admitted, the object, at present, is to shew, that the measures of plague police, enforced to prevent their spreading, are, upon that supposition, not only detrimental, but almost certainly destructive to the sick; without being necessary, or even conducive, to the safety of those in health.

Finding that the phænomena of epidemic diseases could not be accounted for by the *hypothesis* of contagion alone, the partisans of that doctrine have been driven to the subterfuge of enlisting the atmosphere as an auxiliary into their service. Accordingly, they have generally admitted, that, "to the effect of contact, *a certain disposition of the air is necessary*;" "for we often see," says one of them, "*infected* persons arrive from other countries, *yet the disease does not spread.*"[2]

This is a fact, of which I am enabled to adduce some decisive instances; which, among other proofs, shall be employed to shew that epidemic diseases do not depend upon contagion. In this number the celebrated Larnica cases shall not be forgotten, by which Dr. Russel has succeeded in refuting the chief parts of his own elaborate work; and which Mr. Pym, as he wished durability to his Bulamian invention, or permanence to quarantines and lazarettos, committed a great oversight in so freely quoting. But my purpose, at present, is to meet the advocates for contagion upon their own ground.

If, then, to the effect of contact a certain disposition of the air be *necessary* to the production of any disease, that disposition of the air must not only form a part of its cause, but a part, *without which the effect cannot follow.*

Consequently, to remove persons in health from that air, without the aid of which, the disease, even according to the contagionists themselves, cannot be produced by mere contact, must be the

[1] It would not be practicable here, without extending these remarks much beyond their intended limits, to enter into a distinct analysis of the effects of each separate measure of plague police. But those, to whom these observations are particularly addressed, will be able to distinguish to which measure they are more especially applicable, when they do not embrace several, or the whole.

[2] Vide Howard on the Principal Lazarettos of Europe, p. 33.

proper and efficient means of prevention: and to remove the sick, must be a principal part of the method of cure.

It follows, no less clearly, that the continuance of persons in an air viciously disposed, must be one of the most effectual means of rendering the healthy sick, and the diseases of the sick mortal. And to detain them in it upon compulsion, which is the effect of all the usual measures of plague police, is, even admitting contagion, little short of wilful murder.

Nor will the means usually resorted to upon such occasions, for keeping the sick secluded, appear, according to the same doctrines, to be either necessary or conducive to the safety of persons in health.

It is not contended by the most zealous advocates for contagion, even those who have a direct interest in the permanence of the belief, that its influence can extend beyond *a few paces*. Raymond, Physician to the lazaretto at Marseilles, and Desmollins, Surgeon, say, that "*infected* persons are conversed with, without danger, across a barrier, which separates them *only a few paces*."[1]

Giovanelli, Physician to the lazaretto at Leghorn, mentions *five* geometrical paces, as the *greatest* distance to which contagion can extend.[2] They, Physician to the lazaretto at Malta, says: "the *infection* only extends *some* paces."[3] And a Jew Physician of Smyrna is of opinion, "that, in the *greatest* contagion, one may *securely* see a patient at the distance of *two ells*, if the chamber windows be not all shut."[4]

Here we have it on the evidence of persons who cannot be suspected of wishing to curtail its sphere of influence, that infection never extends beyond a few paces. It would certainly be unreasonable to reject evidence of this nature, coming from such a quarter; although, if the same persons were to assert that infection *is* capable of being produced at the distance of one or two paces, or at any distance, I should think it necessary to require proof. But as I am now reasoning upon their own principles, I shall adopt, as its basis, the greatest distance which they have themselves assumed, being five paces. Five paces, then, according to the doctrines of the contagionists, ensures safety as completely as five hundred, or five thousand.

Thus, the healthy inhabitants of a town, district, lazaretto, or vessel, might walk or tarry in perfect security at the distance of five paces from the sick. There could, in such a case, be no possibility of the spreading of infection; and the precaution of keeping the sick at this distance from the rest of society duly enforced, would infallibly, and at once, put an end to the propagation of any

[1] Vide Howard on the Principal Lazarettos of Europe, p. 34.
[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. p. 35.

disease solely depending upon contagion, or, in as far as it might in any degree depend upon such a source.

But the fact is, that a result of this kind has never been known to happen, under the application of the precautionary measures in question, in any epidemic disease. On the contrary, they will be found to have commenced, run their course, and ceased, precisely at the same periods, and in the same manner, where such institutions have existed, and where they have not.

If this reasoning be correct, how greatly ought we to deplore the existence of such regulations as those which follow?—

Ships, goods, and persons, are declared liable to quarantine "coming from, or having touched at, any place from whence His Majesty, with the advice of his Privy Council, shall have adjudged and declared it probable, that the plague, or any other *infectious* disease or distemper, highly dangerous to the health of His Majesty's subjects, *may* be brought; and those having communication with, or receiving any persons or articles from ships so coming from, or having touched at, such infected place," &c.[1]

"The places from whence the plague, or some other *infectious* disease, may be brought into Great Britain, &c. are adjudged to be any part of Turkey, or any port or place in Africa, within the Straits of Gibraltar and the West Barbary, on the Atlantic Ocean."[2]

But we find, that "although certain goods and ships, under particular circumstances, are made subject to certain fixed rates of quarantine, yet it is farther provided, that goods specified in *any* Order of Council, and ships, shall be made subject to quarantine.[3] The Privy Council may make such orders as they shall think necessary upon emergencies."[4]

Thus it appears, that ships and goods coming from any part of the world, and under any circumstances, may be subjected to such restraints and detention as the Privy Council may choose to direct: "they may make such order as they shall think necessary upon emergencies."

This unlimited authority has of course given rise to many injurious acts and regulations. If, for instance, a vessel meets with another vessel, or a squadron, at sea, and is boarded by them, although those so communicating have neither sickness, nor have come from any place at which sickness existed at the time of their departure, she is obliged to do quarantine. I knew a case of this kind, in which a ship (the Sophia and Mary, of Bristol) was obliged

[1] Vide 45 Geo. III. cap. 10. sec. x.; and Order in Council, 5th April, 1815, sec. i.

[2] Vide Order in Council, 5th April, 1805.

[3] 54 Geo. III. cap. 10. sec. xi. [4] Ib. sec. vii.

to perform a quarantine of forty-two days at Malta, merely for having been boarded by an Algerine squadron off Lisbon.

The bare rumour of the existence of a plague in any part of the Mediterranean, gives a pretext for the strict enforcement of quarantine amongst the farthest nations of the North; and the report of a yellow fever in the West Indies, produces an increased vigilance of the plague police establishments on the shores of the Baltic. By the same rule, as the infection in these cases is supposed to be brought in goods, and no one knows the period at which they cease to be contagious, quarantine might, without more impropriety, be enforced upon the arrival of East Indiamen from Bengal or China; or rather ought, in consistency, to be enforced, when the report of the existence of an epidemic has prevailed, at the time of their sailing, in any part of these remote regions.

Considering the matter merely in a view of commercial policy, we may be allowed to regret, that, in conferring powers so arbitrary, extensive, and undefined, the danger, against which it was intended to provide, should have been so implicitly taken for granted; and that, in the absence of all correct knowledge respecting epidemic diseases, no regular inquiry into the subject should have been thought necessary, more than if their nature had been already perfectly understood. By regular inquiry, I do not mean the mere official formality of ascertaining the individual or collective opinions of men, who could not be supposed, without the gift of inspiration, to know more of the nature of pestilential maladies, than they might have found in the puerile traditions of the Catholics of the Levant, and of Italy, transmitted through successive generations unquestioned; or in the absurd fables, respecting contagion, invented by Fracastorius, in 1546, at the instigation of the Pope and his Legates, and since quoted, as knowledge, by every successive writer upon the plague;[1] but, *a continued practical investigation.*

Such, however, have been the tales, first fraudulently imposed upon the world, in Italy, afterwards implicitly adopted by Mead, and servilely copied by his successors, in England, which have served as the foundation of our quarantine laws in this country. Of the injury which they have occasioned to commerce and navigation, some idea may be formed, from the following sweeping clause, which it has been latterly judged expedient to introduce, in order to protect our Levant trade against the competition of the Dutch, and others, who were enabled, by the lenity of their quarantine laws, or an almost total disregard of them, to anticipate

[1] Such is the story of the leather cap, by which 25 Germans are said by that author to have been successively infected in Italy; which, with many similar tales, I shall endeavour to place in their true light.

and undersell us, with respect to Turkish commodities, in the British markets: "Certain goods, wares, and merchandises, being the growth, produce, or manufacture of Turkey, or of any place in Africa, within the Straits of Gibraltar, or in the West Barbary, on the Atlantic Ocean, coming from any place in Europe, without the Straits, or on the Continent of America, where there is not a regular establishment for the performance of quarantine," are declared subject to the same regulations as if coming directly from the Mediterranean, or the West Barbary, on the Atlantic Ocean.[1] The ships which bring them shall do quarantine, like those from Turkey, with clean bills of health.[2]

It can hardly be supposed, that to guard against contagion could have been the design of this regulation; since, with that view, it would have been perfectly ridiculous. And although, with what I understand to be its avowed object of protecting our commerce against the rivalry of the Dutch, it may appear somewhat less irrational; it would certainly have been still better, that such a measure had not been rendered necessary. The more numerous, complex, and rigid, are our quarantine regulations, the more will our positive, as well as our relative advantages, with regard to the commerce with the Levant, as I shall afterwards have occasion more fully to explain, be diminished.

Of the different Kinds of Quarantine.

There are, in this country, six kinds of quarantine.

1. That performed, on account of actual pestilence, or *suspected* sickness, at the Isles of Scilly only, its period being 44 days.

A ship bound from Turkey, we shall suppose, arrives in England. She has one, or a few sick persons on board. The disease is immediately concluded to be contagious, or *suspected*, which has the same effect; although it would be difficult to conceive how one or two sick persons, having an infectious disease capable of being propagated, as is supposed of plague, could make a long voyage, in daily or hourly contact with their messmates, without communicating the malady to all the crew. But there is probably no instance in the annals of the trade between Turkey and this country, of the arrival of a vessel having, or having had, her whole crew sick. Now, it is hardly possible to suppose, that any one can have about him that potent and penetrating kind of contagion,

[1] Vide Orders in Council, 5th April, 1805.
[2] Ibid. sect. v. and xlii.

imputed to the plague, without his communicating it to the whole crew; although a disease may certainly affect a whole crew, scurvy for instance, without being in the least contagious.

These trifling inconsistencies, however, being disregarded, quarantine ensues. In the mode of performing it, one should suppose that some regard might be had to the greatest infectious distance (five paces) laid down by the lazaretto authorities of the Levant. But no! neither five, nor five hundred, nor yet five thousand paces, are deemed sufficient by the plague authorities, in this country, to ensure safety. They do not consider themselves as secure from infection, until this unfortunate ship and cargo, her crew and passengers, sick and well, articles enumerated, and articles not enumerated, as contagious, have fairly reached the rocks of Scilly![1]

The sole precautions necessary in this case, even according to the doctrines of the contagionists, would be to place the sick in good air, with ample space, and suitable provisions and attendance, having the interval of five paces between them and the rest of the community, until death or recovery took place.

The passengers and crew in health, the ship and cargo should then, according to the same doctrines, be kept in quarantine; that is, isolated at the distance of five paces or more from persons in health, but only for the longest period, after being separated from the sick, which the contagionists suppose to elapse between receiving the infection and the appearance of the disease; that is, for three days; any farther period could have no object.

I beg it to be observed, that I am here again taking the doctrines of the advocates for contagion as my text, and deducing from them just inferences, in order to shew the absurdity, *upon their own principles*, of the precautionary measures adopted to prevent the spreading of epidemic diseases.

Recommencement of Quarantine.

It is farther enacted, that if any death, suspected to arise from a contagious disease, happen during any period of the quarantine, it shall recommence.[2] And thus, if a suspected death should take place on the last day, the ship, crew, passengers, and cargo, must submit to a farther detention of forty, or forty-four days; and it might even so happen that, from an unfortunate repetition of such an occurrence, the detention might be prolonged until the ship and

[1] "Commanders, or masters of ships, having an actual pestilence on board, are directed, if within the Straits, to proceed to some lazaretto in the Mediterranean; if without the Straits, to proceed to the Scilly Isles."—*Vide* 45 *Geo. III.* cap. 10. sect. xiii.

[2] Vide Ord. in Council, 5th April, 1805, sect. xxix.

cargo were rotten, or her crew and passengers dead.[1] Whereas, by the immediate separation of the sick from those in health, upon the arrival of the vessel, the whole of the time usually wasted in quarantine, with the exception of the three days, might be saved, and the whole of the loss upon the ship and cargo obviated. The propriety of even this quarantine of three days, let it be recollected, is only upon the principles of the doctrine of contagion.

Such a chain of accidents, it is true, may not often happen; but the law is not, on that account, the less injudicious. If the evil were of frequent occurrence, its immensity would alone demonstrate the absurdity of the enactment, even to those who did not immediately feel the injury.

But it is so seldom, if ever, that quarantine is performed in England, on account of *suspected* sickness, that, but for the principle, the point would scarcely have been worthy of any, and, from its consequences, does not appear to merit farther consideration.

2. The second kind of quarantine is that performed by ships having no suspected sickness, and bearing clean bills of health; that is, a certificate that there was no suspected sickness at the port from whence they sailed, during their loading, or at the period of their departure. The time is fifteen days, to which must be added that occupied in discharging such parts of their cargoes as consist of enumerated articles.[2] Quarantine, under these circumstances, is performed at different specified ports.

That a ship arriving in England, not only without any sickness, but with a clean bill of health, should be required to do quarantine for a single minute, seems to me to be a regulation without an object; especially when we reflect that all ships coming from

[1] This would certainly be their fate, under the circumstances stated, if plague were really contagious. All these regulations have been literally copied from those of Venice, without considering that, even had their foundation been correct, the difference of the circumstances of the two countries would have required an essential difference in the application of the principles in detail. "When a person dies in any of these lazarettos, unless the Physician and Surgeon of the Office of Health declare that his death is not owing to any contagious cause, and are very clear in their reports, all those who are under quarantine are obliged to recommence it; and this as often as there happens any suspected death." This, and other vexations, such as having no pay, sometimes give rise to mutinies among the crews detained in quarantine.—*Vide Howard's Account of the Principal Lazarettos of Europe*, p. 7.

[2] Ships furnished with clean bills of health shall, as well as the crews and passengers, perform a quarantine of fifteen days from the date of the delivery into the lazaretto, of such part of the cargoes as consist of the goods enumerated in class first and second; or if there be no such cargo, from the arrival of the ships at their appointed stations. *Vide Order in Council, 5th April*, 1805, sect. xii.

Turkey perform more than a full quarantine at sea during the passage. Is it not a violation of all common sense, that we, who are double the distance from Turkey with some other countries, should do double the quarantine? It appears even more preposterous, in proportion as we are more removed from the *focus* of supposed infection, than the quarantine of *eighty days*, which used to be performed at Venice, but is now considered superfluous, even there. "Formerly," says Howard, "when persons who had the plague were brought from the city, (Venice), they were put, for forty days, into a large room in the lazaretto, and afterwards into another apartment, for the same time, before they were discharged."[1]

The period now supposed sufficient for expurgation is forty days from the commencement of the malady; although there is no better ground for this than mere *hypothesis*; and forty minutes, forty hours, forty weeks, or forty years, would, in point of principle, have been equally justifiable, or equally absurd.

The only danger that can be supposed to exist, under this species of quarantine, is that which is presumed to depend upon the capacity of goods to receive, retain, and communicate infection. This, as shall be presently shewn, amounts to nothing; but this quarantine has the advantage over the two following kinds, that, with precisely the same risk, it exacts only half the detention.

The following quarantines, although subject to different periods, are all performed upon grounds similar to each other, and similar to the preceding.

3. A ship sailing from Turkey, with *suspected* bills of health, commonly called *touched* patents; that is, when a suspicion of plague exists at the place of her lading or departure, but without suspected sickness on board at the period of her arrival in England, performs quarantine for thirty-four days at Stangate Creek only.[2]

4. A vessel sailing without clean bills of health, that is, with a certificate that the plague is understood to be actually existing at the port of her lading or departure, but arriving without suspected sickness in England, performs quarantine for forty-four days *at Stangate Creek only*. This is at present, and has been for a long time, by far the most frequent species of quarantine.[3]

[1] Vide an Account of the Principal Lazarettos of Europe, pp. 9 and 12.

[2] "Ships, &c. arriving with *suspected* bills of health, (commonly called *touched* patents, or bills,) shall respectively be subject to ten days less quarantine than those without clean bills of health." *Vide Order in Council, April* 5, 1805, sect. xli.

[3] Ships without clean bills of health, but having no suspected disease on board, shall perform quarantine at Stangate Creek, and *no where else*.—*Vide Order in Council, April* 5, 1805, sect. xiv. xxxvii. and xxxix.

5. Goods, enumerated in class first and second, brought to England in ships that have already performed quarantine at any of the lazarettos in the Mediterranean, are directed to perform a farther quarantine of fifteen days.[1]

6. A similar quarantine is directed to be performed by goods, the growth, produce, or manufacture of Turkey, &c., coming from any place in Europe, without the Straits, or on the continent of America, where there is not a regular establishment for the performance of quarantine, as if coming directly from the Mediterranean,[2] &c.

The last seems to be merely a politico-commercial regulation; and the preceding one to have been made to keep it in countenance.

Upon what principle it has been decided that the Scilly Isles are the proper station for ships having *suspected* sickness on board to perform quarantine, or that Stangate Creek is the proper station for ships having no sickness, I am equally at a loss to conjecture. Nor can I forbear to contrast with these regulations the conduct of the Turkish government, in the year 1665, in freely and without restriction admitting some of our ships into their harbours, after they had been driven away, *as suspected*, from several Christian ports. I should be curious to know what measures our contagionists, in their wisdom, would advise the Privy Council to adopt, if it were ascertained that Turkish vessels had it in contemplation, for purposes of commerce, to frequent our shores. It is probable, I think, they would not consider themselves quite safe, if a quarantine station were appointed for them nearer than the Orkneys. The Mahomedans would not certainly hold intercourse with any nation upon these conditions. And may we not find in quarantine a solution, why the Turkish flag is so rarely, if ever to be seen beyond the Straits of Gibraltar?[3]

But, to return from what may appear to be a digression: if the occasional detention of a ship, passengers, crew, and cargo, for forty-four days, at the Scilly Isles, on account of the sickness of one, or a few persons on board, and who might have been at once removed, and the rest liberated, be, as I have shewn, both absurd, and, as far as it operates, mischievous; what ought we to think of the detention, for the same period of time, of almost the whole commerce of the Levant, without any sickness, and consequently, without any assignable motive, at Stangate Creek? For it is

[1] Order in Council, April 5, 1805, sect. xliii. [2] Ibid.

[3] It is singular that the opinion that plague does not depend upon contagion, has been imputed as an error to the Turks, as connected with their ideas of fatalism; whilst the real error upon this subject has been regarded as truth, and its fraudulent origin not observed.

obvious that the want of a clean bill of health cannot in any view of reason amount to a motive. There being no sickness, no apprehension can be entertained of infection from persons: for, if the crew of a ship could be supposed to go to sea, their persons being loaded with infection, without the malady having actually made its appearance, either the whole of it would be blown away before they could make one fourth of the passage, or it would remain entirely inoperative, from the absence of that disposition of the air which is considered by the contagionists indispensable to render it efficient.

As of late years very few vessels have arrived from Turkey with clean bills of health, so nearly all the ships in that trade, belonging to the United Kingdom, have been obliged to perform quarantine; that is, to lose one third of their time, without an object, at Stangate Creek. And this, as it is of constant occurrence, and the other (quarantine for *suspected* sickness, at the Scilly Isles) but very rarely happens, comprehends almost the whole of the evil. Indeed, it may reasonably be presumed to be alone sufficient to arrest the progress of the trade of this country with the Levant; and but for the destruction of that of France, in consequence of the events of the war, would have probably, ere this, effected its annihilation. It remains still to be seen, whether, upon the revival of the trade of France with Turkey, in the event of the continuance of peace between France and England, this will not actually be the result.

I shall presently shew, from historical records, the pernicious effects upon navigation and commerce which quarantine has actually produced in this country. But this seems to be the proper place for saying a few words respecting clean, suspected, and unclean bills of health.

Of Bills of Health.

A bill of health is a document from the Consul at the port from which a vessel sails, in any of the countries specified, purporting either that, at the time of her sailing there was no plague, or suspicion of plague; that there were rumours of plague, but no actual plague; or that there was actual plague. The first are called clean bills, the second suspected, and the last foul bills; or, by a courteous circumlocution, being without clean bills of health.

Although, there being no sickness on board, there does not, upon the supposition of contagion, appear to be any difference in the risk; vessels upon their arrival in England have, as we have seen, quarantines allotted to them of very different periods, according to the

specification of the bill of health with which they may be furnished; that is, fifteen, thirty-four, and forty-four days respectively. And if the detention of fifteen days be justly deemed a hardship, where there is not the smallest shadow of risk, how much greater is the hardship of being detained for thirty-four or forty-four days, where the danger is equally chimerical! For even according to the doctrines of the contagionists, it is clear that there can be no positive risk but in cases of suspected sickness.

Bills of health, then, not being founded upon any probable danger, arising from the existence of actual sickness among the crew of a nature suspected to be infectious; but upon the supposition of the possibility of an infection (itself not proved) being capable of being communicated at some uncertain period, by some unknown artificer, to some undescribed article of produce or manufacture, regarded, upon some unintelligible principle, as capable of receiving, retaining, and again communicating that infection, upon some unexpected occasion, to living persons, must be regarded as not only evidently absurd in their principle, but even an insult to common sense.

Let us examine the practice. A single *accident* (the term used to denote death) from the plague, or the report of an accident occurring in some obscure quarter of the great cities of Smyrna or Constantinople, whilst a ship is loading for England, is deemed sufficient ground to refuse that ship a clean bill of health. (We have seen that even clean bills of health do not exempt from quarantine.) But even this ground, such as it is, can never be a matter of certainty. There are no means of ascertaining the truth of these reports. The Consuls cannot themselves, nor any of those immediately connected with them, if they were so inclined, enter into personal inquiries, as this might subject them to quarantine, or, as is supposed, to danger of infection. These reports they are, therefore, obliged to take upon trust; and as they are often fabricated for purposes of commercial speculation, those who give them credit are very liable to be deceived. Indeed, those to whose department it belongs to grant bills of health, whilst they have reason to believe the reports that are in circulation to be fabricated, consider themselves as having no option, but to act upon them. Hence ships may be despatched without clean bills of health, when there is neither plague, nor any suspicious sickness; whilst those who have fabricated the reports upon which they have been refused, may have been despatching cargoes by circuitous routes, in order to arrive at our markets before our own can have finished their quarantine; and if this mischief can even be in any degree remedied by protecting regulations, it must

still be at the price of additional restrictions upon navigation and commerce, and enhancing the value of the commodities of the Levant to the general consumer.

At Constantinople there are, at almost all periods of the year, and in almost every year, straggling cases, or reports of cases, of plague; whilst at Smyrna, the periods of its commencement and cessation are more distinctly defined. A town must be free from plague six weeks before clean bills of health can be issued.[1] For these reasons, although clean bills of health are sometimes issued at Smyrna, it is very rarely, especially of late years, that they have been granted at Constantinople. And this may be, in part, the reason why the Smyrna market is better supplied with cargoes for this part of the world; why ships prefer going there to load; and why so few English ships now resort to the Turkish capital.

It may also afford a solution, to a certain extent, of the great advantages, under the system of quarantine, which the French Levant trade enjoys over that of Great Britain; advantages which I shall endeavour to shew would be much less considerable, if no quarantine were performed in either country.

But it is farther evident, from these observations, that without reference to the question of infection, communicated from person to person, unless the system of bills of health, together with that of quarantines, be immediately abolished, which can alone prove an efficient cure for so many and so great evils; or, at least, if some radical alterations be not made in the regulations respecting them, the most insignificant flags of Europe will prevail over us in the trade of the Levant.

Infection, as such, cannot be communicated to, retained by, or propagated from Goods.

It is upon the chimerical notion, as it now appears, that certain goods, wares, and merchandises, therefore called *susceptible*, are capable of receiving, retaining, and again communicating, at some uncertain period, to the living body an infection capable of producing desolation and death among mankind, that both bills of health in Turkey, and quarantines in England, are founded: for the occurrence of *suspected disease*, as a ground of quarantine, is so rare, if it ever happen, that, regarded in its effects, it is scarcely worthy of consideration.[2]

[1] The reports respecting the cessation, as well as the commencement of plague, are equally subject to uncertainty, even if the principle were correct upon which bills of health are granted.

[2] There is not, as I am informed, an instance upon record, of a ship being

In arguing for the abolition of the system of bills of health and quarantines, I trust it will be thought that it is treating the advocates for contagion liberally to meet them upon their own ground. Having, for the sake of the argument, admitted that epidemic diseases may depend, according to their own notions of the matter, *partly* upon specific contagion, capable, with the *aid*, however, of a certain disposition of the atmosphere, of propagating itself from one person to another; it will even then appear, that neither by facts nor by reasoning can the opinion be justified that such infection may be communicated from persons to goods, and from goods again to persons.

If, to the effect of contact, a certain disposition of the atmosphere be admitted to be necessary to the propagation of infection, even from one living body to another, is it not the height of human absurdity to suppose that infection, *as such*, and by virtue of its inherent powers, can pass from the living body into *inanimate matter*, upon which the air cannot be presumed to have a similar influence; and that, after residing for some time in this inanimate matter, it can repass, still retaining its infectious qualities, into the living human body?

In the Levant no one is afraid to touch the body of a person dead of the plague.[1] This fearlessness must have arisen from experience and observation of the innoxiousnessof this species of contact. If, then, the human body, which, in its living state, had been supposed capable of propagating contagion to other living bodies, be acknowledged by the advocates for that *hypothesis* to have ceased, with the cessation of life, to possess that capability, upon what ground can it be assumed that this faculty may be possessed or acquired by other inanimate substances?

Here, then, the whole of that extraordinary doctrine of articles susceptible of contagion in the first degree, articles susceptible in the second degree, and articles non-susceptible, upon which bills of health, quarantines, and other regulations of plague police have been founded, falls to the ground.

The positive facts which shew that goods do not propagate infection, are even more unequivocal than those which relate to persons. From the information which I obtained at Malta, and in other places, I feel myself authorized in concluding, that persons employed in the expurgation of goods in the lazarettos, have been even less frequently affected by epidemic diseases, in proportion to

obliged to do quarantine at the Scilly Isles, on account of an actual pestilence on board. Consequently, even according to the doctrines of contagion, quarantine in this country can have no object.

[1] Vide an Account of the Principal Lazarettos of Europe, p. 25, note.

their numbers, than some other classes of the community:[1] and from such persons, when seized, an epidemic disease has never been known to be propagated.

Neither have any instances been known of persons, who have been seized whilst packing and unpacking goods, or stowing and unstowing cargoes, (itself an event of rare occurrence,) communicating their disease to others.

All the relations, then, of the propagation of infection in epidemic diseases, whether from the living body or inanimate matter, with which the public have been deluded or amused, for two centuries and a half, will be found to be of no higher authority than that of the leather cap of Fracastorius,[2] or the feather-bed of Benedictus.[3]

As infection, admitting it to exist in a state capable of being propagated, with the help of a certain disposition of the air, according to the contagionists, from one living body to another, cannot, as has been shewn, be communicated from the living body to dead matter, and again from dead matter to the living body, quarantine must, upon their own principles, be in all cases not only superfluous, but pernicious.

The doctrine of the susceptibility of goods, then, upon which it is founded, may be regarded as one of the most imaginary, delusive, and destructive emanations of popular credulity, and pious fraud, by which devastation has been spread over the face of our planet.[4]

But granting, for a moment, that infection may even be propagated from persons to goods, and from goods again to persons, what would be the consequences? The consequences would be, that the quarantines at present in use would be wholly inadequate to their object; and that *no quarantine could ensure safety, without being interminable!*

[1] This fact is acknowledged, in his answers to my queries, by the President of the College of Physicians *(Proto-Medico)* of that island, although a firm believer in contagion.

[2] De Contagione, lib. iii. cap. 7.

[3] De Peste, cap. 3.—These tales, invented, as I shall shew, at the instigation of the Pope and his Legates, during the Council of Trent, afterwards became the principal foundation for quarantines and lazarettos.

[4] For the fanciful classification here alluded to, see Order in Council, April 5, 1805, sect. xxx. and xxxv.

In a manuscript, with the perusal of which I was favoured at Constantinople, by Mr. Julius Cæsar Kelli, a native of Leghorn, and for many years a practitioner of medicine in the Levant, containing observations which he had made during the plague at Salonica, in 1783, and at Brusa, in 1800, 1812, and 1813, I find it very gravely stated, that warm bread, pastry, and feathers, are amongst the articles *most susceptible* of infection; and that the shaggy, or long-haired horse, is the *only* animal *not* susceptible!

It must be quite obvious, that if infection exist in goods, no quarantine can avail that is not of a period somewhat longer than the greatest duration of the capability of such goods to retain and communicate that infection. Thus, as the plague, we are told, spread in Paris from rags, after having lain several years in an old wall,[1] *several years* is the *shortest* period for which rags ought to perform quarantine. But, if infection can exist in rags for several years, what certainty can we have that it may not continue to exist for several ages, or for several centuries? Again, a feather-bed, as we are informed, having communicated infection at the end of seven years;[2] *seven years* is the *shortest* quarantine that feathers ought to be made to perform. And what guarantee have we of safety even at the end of that period? If feathers be capable of retaining infection for seven years, how shall we ascertain whether they be not capable of retaining it for seventy, or seven hundred years?

The absurdity of these consequences, from the principles of the contagionists, ought, I should think, to be quite conclusive of the argument.

Continuing to reason upon the same grounds, it may be proper, after having shewn that the measures actually in use for the prevention of epidemic diseases, are absurd, according to the doctrines upon which they are founded, to inquire into the nature of those means which would, upon the same principles, be efficient, and ought, if they were correct, to be employed.

The obvious method of preventing all farther propagation of a disease, communicated in the manner supposed by the contagionists, would be to remove the sick. This would of itself be sufficient, since those affected could not, without the aid of the air, communicate the infection to others; and persons in health, the contagion being removed from them, could not be infected by the air alone.

No species of quarantine, no period of confinement or seclusion, could, according to these doctrines, be necessary, either in respect to the sick, or to persons in health.

Even in cases where infection had taken place, but the disease had not yet appeared, it would be sufficient, still acting upon the same opinions, at the breaking out of the symptoms, to remove the persons afflicted, in the same manner as the other sick had been previously removed.

But removal being rendered, by any circumstances, impracticable, it would be sufficient, for the safety of those in health, to keep the suspected in quarantine for the longest supposed period between

[1] Theodore Mayerne Conseils contre la Peste, &c. p. 631.
[2] Alexander Benedictus, de Peste, c. 3.

the reception of infection and the appearance of disease; being, according to the contagionists, three days; and those actually labouring under disease, for the longest supposed period of the duration of the capability of propagating infection, being forty or forty-two days from the commencement of the disease.

Thus it appears, that in no possible case can any measures of restriction be necessary, according to the principles of the contagionists themselves, taking them in their best defined form, excepting when the removal of the sick from the noxious air, which, together with contact, is supposed to produce the disease, becomes impracticable,—a circumstance which can very rarely if ever happen.

The measures, then, which obviously result from the doctrines of contagion, as declared by its most experienced advocates, are almost diametrically opposite to those which are now generally in use.

But, it would equally accord with the preceding opinions, as it obviously follows from the principles of non-contagion, that both those affected, and those in health, should, in all cases in which it is practicable, be removed from the noxious atmosphere, as the most efficient mode of prevention, as well as an essential part of the cure.

When, however, as most frequently, or almost always, happens, the removal of persons in health, as in large cities, is altogether impracticable, other means of prevention become necessary, far different indeed from those vain attempts to purify the mass of a deteriorated atmosphere, which have usually been resorted to upon such occasions.

These means shall be considered in treating of the methods of prevention founded upon the knowledge of the true cause of epidemic diseases.

Institutions of Plague Police are, in fact, inefficient for their Object.

There cannot be a clearer illustration of the inefficiency, as to their object, or of the perniciousness, in other respects, of the measures of precaution usually adopted against the propagation of epidemic diseases, than what happened in the plagues of London in 1625 and 1665; in both which instances, whilst the houses were kept shut up, the disease continued to spread, and mortality to increase; and when they were allowed to be opened, mortality decreased, and the disease ceased to spread.

On the former of these occasions, the houses were allowed to be opened in the beginning of September. The deaths, from plague, in the last week of August, amounted to 4218. The next week they were diminished to 3344; the week after to 2250; and the third week to 1612.[1] These are undeniable facts.

In 1665, the circumstances were almost precisely similar: and it was when the houses had been thrown open, and all other measures of precaution abandoned in despair, that the malady suddenly declined and ceased. These facts shall be distinctly proved from historical records.[2]

Thus it appears, that, with the prohibition of intercourse, the disease was aggravated and extended; whilst, with its restoration, it was mitigated and circumscribed. It would be incorrect, and cannot be necessary, to argue, that these circumstances were in the relation of cause and effect. But they clearly shew, that measures of restriction have not the effect of arresting the progress, or mitigating the severity, of pestilential maladies.

It is, indeed, evident, from the histories of the plagues which have infested London since the year 1547, as far as we have authentic records, that at least three-fourths of the mortality ought to be attributed to the restrictions by which the inhabitants were confined to their houses, or, at any rate, to the town; since, if they attempted to depart, they were driven back, *vi et armis*, by the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages and country; to irregularity and deficiency in the supply of provisions, from the dread of infection; to the want of attendance upon the sick; and to the other evils occasioned by the belief in contagion.

Gassendus (*Notitia Eccles. Diniensis*) relates, that, in a plague which affected Digne, in Provence, in 1619, out of *ten thousand* inhabitants, but *fifteen hundred* remained alive: and this mortality he imputes to the citizens having been so closely confined, that they were not suffered to go to their country houses: whereas, in another pestilence, which broke out in the same place a year and a half after, owing to the liberty being extended, there did not die above *one hundred* persons. Without imputing more than the due share of mortality to the operation of the restrictive measures employed upon this occasion, it is obvious, not only

[1] *Vide* the Shutting up of Houses, soberly debated, London, 1665.—*Mead's Discourse* p. 37.

[2] It is a curious circumstance, that more information, of an applicative nature, respecting the plague of 1665, will be found in the journal of an obscure saddler of Whitechapel, than in all the writings of the Medical Faculty.

that they did not tend to stop the progress of the disease, but that they must have greatly aggravated its severity. And it is strange that Mead, who quotes and applies these facts in a different sense, should not have felt how incompatible they are with the doctrine of contagion.

Every one has read of the memorable plague of Athens, recorded by Thucydides, in which the vigilance of the Peloponnesian besiegers, serving in lieu of that of the plague guardians of modern times, contributed to destroy so many of the unfortunate inhabitants; and no one will contend that, if the Athenians could have freely quitted their city, one fourth of the number would have perished.

But of all the details respecting the ravages of pestilential maladies to be found in history, those concerning the plague of Marseilles, in 1720, are perhaps the most afflicting; where nearly half the inhabitants of that ancient city perished, nine tenths of them, I am persuaded, victims of the barbarous and cruel regulations by which they were compelled to remain perpetually exposed to the influence of the noxious atmosphere, which was undoubtedly the first and principal cause of the disease; famine and other collateral causes, having, in the course of its progress, been superadded.

That contagion could have had no share in the production of any of these pestilences, is evident, both upon the principle, which shall be elucidated in my "Researches," that "*diseases which depend on contagion, never arise from other sources; and that diseases which arise from other sources, never depend upon contagion;*" and from the acknowledged inefficiency of all the measures that have been adopted for checking the progress of epidemic maladies.

Respecting that of Marseilles, we find the following article, quoted under the head of Paris, in the Postman of August 6, 1720: "The extraordinary council of health appointed by the Regent, meet three or four times a week, and have taken the advice of the most noted physicians of this city, about the most proper means for preventing the spreading of the plague, *since lines, entrenchments, and other precautions, cannot do it.*"[1] The walls of Marseilles were not able to keep in, nor those of Aix or Toulon to keep out, this malady; circumstances which, if it had depended upon contagion, could not have happened, since, in that case, even according to the advocates of this doctrine, these places would have afforded more than sufficient security. Infection can neither scale walls, nor leap ditches.

1 Vide Discourse concerning the Plague, by Sir Richard Manningham, p. 31.

In Gibraltar, and many parts of Spain, as we are enabled to infer from the materials published by Sir James Fellowes, and other advocates for contagion, epidemic diseases have, since the introduction and progress toward perfection of plague police establishments, been even more frequent than before. To impute this increased frequency, indeed, to the operation of these institutions, although such would be the obvious conclusion from the doctrine of contagion, would be as inconsistent with truth, as to impute to their absence the recurrence of pestilences in countries where they do not exist. The fact is, that epidemic diseases commence, pursue their course, and terminate at similar periods, and in a similar manner, in all countries similarly situated, whether these countries possess plague police establishments or not; but with this difference, that where these establishments exist, they never fail, in the precise measure of their activity, to increase mortality, and to aggravate disease.

In 1813, for instance, the plague commenced, spread, declined, and ceased at similar periods, in Malta, where there are quarantines, lazarettos, and other plague police regulations, of the most perfect kind; and in Wallachia, where there are none.[1] Of the periods, in regard to the latter, I was informed by the Prince of that country, who is an intelligent Greek, and by the foreign Consuls, as well as by several of the medical faculty, principally Germans, resident at Bucharest. And these statements are the less liable to suspicion, that my informants are all faithful believers in contagion.

It is not a little remarkable, and very much in point, that in the same year, upon the rumour of the plague having broken out at Malta, the garrison of Gibraltar was put under rigid quarantine, and remained so for two months; notwithstanding which, the disease commenced, ran its course, and terminated, in the same manner as if no precautions whatever had been taken.[2]

Considering these facts, it may be regarded as a curious phænomenon in the history of the human mind, that the advocates for contagion and quarantines should persevere, as they have recently done in Spain and in Malta, in attributing the disappearance of the malady at its usual season, to the vigilance and activity of the police institutions. It shall be rendered manifest, that, excepting in a view of mischief, it would have been precisely the same thing whether they had been vigilant or asleep.

[1] These institutions have been brought, according to the existing ideas, to the highest perfection, at Odessa, under the government of the Duke de Richlieu; and at Malta, by Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Maitland. But they never have been, and never will be, able to prevent the spreading of pestilence, when the circumstances occur that would otherwise produce it.

[2] Vide a practical account of the Mediterranean fever, by W. Burnet, M. D. p. 479.

The circumstances connected with the frequent recurrence of the plague in England during the century which preceded 1665, as well as those connected with the exemption which it has enjoyed from that malady during the century and a half which have intervened, are equally in proof that the absence or the presence of that malady do not depend, in the smallest degree, upon the state of our intercourse with Turkey, or any other country.

In the 73 years which preceded 1665, when there was very little commerce or communication with the Levant, the plague occurred seventeen times in England, allowing that of 1636 to have existed, with intervals, twelve years.

During the fifty years which followed 1665, although the trade and communication with the Levant must have been at least quadrupled, whilst England still had no institutions of plague police, and the disease continued to visit Turkey with undiminished frequency, it did not once occur in this country.

According to these data, however, if the disease had depended upon communication with Turkey, that is, upon infection from goods, (for there have been no instances of the arrival of persons actually labouring under disease of a pestilential nature,) the plague, observing a similar rate of recurrence as in the 73 years which preceded, would have appeared about forty-six times in England, from 1665 to 1720. Its total exemption under such circumstances, however, appears to me to amount to forty-six good reasons against the existence of contagion in goods; whilst not one reason can be found in favour of the contrary opinion, now so generally acted upon.

Hence it would be as unreasonable to impute to quarantine the exemption of England from plague, during the century which has elapsed since its institution, as to impute it to any other regulation, of which the existence happened to commence about the same period; or as it would be to attribute the frequent recurrence of plague in Turkey to the want of these establishments.

If such conclusions were correct, Spain, Gibraltar, Malta, Marseilles, the Ionian Islands, and the Venetian territories, all of which are copiously supplied with these institutions, would never have the plague; whilst it would be constantly infesting Persia, India, &c., which have not the benefit of these sovereign preventives: neither of which do we find to be the case.

Plague Police Establishments are injurious to Health, Navigation, and Commerce.

Since to produce disease must be the obvious and necessary

consequence of detention and confinement, under circumstances calculated to depress the mind or deprive the body of its usual exercise, it cannot be necessary to cite proofs of the insalubrity of quarantine, or other measures of plague police. They are to be found in the most ordinary laws of life. Howard used to complain of constantly experiencing headache during his visits to the lazarettos and hospitals. [1]

My business, at present, is rather with the effect of these institutions upon navigation and commerce.

Perhaps the best mode of estimating the effect of quarantine upon commerce and navigation, is to compare those of France and England with Turkey at several periods.

Previous to 1669, when there was no quarantine in either country, the Levant trade of England, as we learn from Anderson's useful work upon commerce, was superior to that of France.

From 1669 to 1720, quarantine being established in France, but not in England, our Levant commerce still continued to preponderate.

From 1720 to 1785, quarantine existing in both countries, the trade of England regularly declined; so that from 1760 to 1785, the average annual exports were not quite equal to one-fourth of those of the twenty years preceding 1720, nor the imports to one half. [2]

During the same period the trade of France with Turkey regularly increased; so that its exports, in 1787, were to those of England, in 1785, as fifteen and a half; and its imports as ten and a half to one. [3]

The state of our Levant commerce, from the breaking out of the war, a few years afterwards, to the present period, as there was no competition, can afford no *data*.

As the remedies which were attempted to be applied to these evils all failed of success, we may presume, that the causes to which they had been imputed were not the right ones.

Under the persuasion that our inferiority might depend upon the limitations under which our Levant trade was conducted, although these limitations existed in an equal or greater degree

[1] Vide an account of the Principal Lazarettos of Europe, p. 106.

[2] Vide And. Com. Vol. IV. passim.—The difference seems so surprising, that I cannot but apprehend, that I must have committed some errors in my deductions from the *data* of Mr. Anderson: but, if I have, the reader will, I dare say, believe that it was not wilful; and I shall be much obliged to any one who will enable me to correct any error of importance into which I may have fallen.

[3] In 1787, the exports and imports of France to Turkey amounted each to about a million sterling.—*Vide. And. Com.* Vol. IV. p. 657.

when our commerce surpassed that of France, an act of parliament was passed in 1754, by which every subject of Great Britain, desiring to become a member of the Turkey Company, was directed to be admitted, within thirty days after making such request, paying for such admission twenty pounds for the use of the Company, and no more.[1]

Notwithstanding this enlargement, the trade continued to decline from 1754 to 1785, more rapidly than before; and as there appears to be no reason to doubt that this state of decay would have continued progressive, it is more than probable that, but for the intervention of the French war of the Revolution, and the destruction of the French commerce of the Levant, ours would, ere this, have been wholly annihilated.

Amongst the palliatives resorted to in mitigation of this evil, was a law, passed in 1759, to prohibit Britishsubjects from exporting French broad-cloth to Turkey, and from importing raw silk from Leghorn into Great Britain.[2]

A duty was also laid, in 1781, upon cotton and cotton wool, imported into this kingdom in foreign ships or vessels, during the then existing hostilities.[3]

But these protecting laws, as they did not touch the main cause of the evil, were, as might be expected, wholly unavailing.

From the moment of the establishment of the quarantine laws in England, our Levant commerce began and continued to decline, until the Turkey trade of France also fell into our hands. This coincidence clearly indicates these laws as the main cause of the evils. It is both so obvious and so adequate, that there can be no necessity to look for any other; and if we do not, by its removal, apply the proper remedy, it is not difficult to foresee, that as France is about to resume her rivalry, perhaps with more advantages than before, it will not be long before she regains her superiority.

Although there can be no doubt that quarantine operates injuriously to commerce and navigation in France, and in every other country in which it has been adopted, as well as in England; yet it must be observed, that neither the inconvenience nor the expense of doing quarantine at Marseilles, when it is even of the same duration, can be near so great as at the Isles of Scilly, or in Stangate Creek, or in Milford Haven. And hence the advantages enjoyed by France, from the situation of Marseilles, when there were no quarantines in either country, must be now greatly inhanced by the different operation of those establishments in each

[1] And. Com. Vol. III. p. 292, 3.
[2] Id. Vol. III. p. 317, 8. [3] Id. Vol. IV. p. 398.

It is evident, that from proximity merely, vessels may go from Marseilles to Smyrna, embracing the intervals in which that place is known to be free from plague, and from rumours of plague; and after having supplied themselves with all that the demand requires of the commodities of the Levant, may return at seasonable periods, subject only, for the most part, to the short detention required under clean bills of health, whilst by far the greatest number of our vessels, not having the same facilities of embracing the most favourable seasons, are placed under the circumstances which subject them to the performance of the long quarantine of forty-four days.

This constitutes a very great difference in respect to the injury which the trade of each country suffers from those regulations. But there is a further circumstance, which is also much against us in this comparison. Marseilles being the most conveniently situated point in France for the centre of Levant commerce, the merchandize of these countries, after suffering, generally, no farther detention at that port than the period of the shortest quarantine, are promptly transmitted to all the other parts of the kingdom; whilst ours, by being consigned to Stangate Creek, is doomed, after having performed the longest period of quarantine, to the farther detention of a circuitous navigation, arising from the inappropriate situation, excepting for the port of London, of that place.

With respect to the comparative disadvantages to which our Levant commerce is exposed by the quarantine [1] laws, and of their positive mischiefs, which are both great and numerous, I shall, for the present, only observe, without insisting upon incidental expenses, the tear and wear of ships, the wages of crews, or the waste or destruction of cargoes, that the *detention merely* must either have the effect of diminishing the profits, on the commerce and navigation to the Levant, by one-third, or of inhancing, in the same ratio, the price of the commodities of that country to the general consumer, since, but for this detention, vessels would make at least three voyages, where they now make only two.

The severity with which, even under the least unfavourable circumstances, the effects of quarantine are felt by the commercial community, is well evinced by the following circumstance. The Council of Commerce, established by the French King in 1700, presented a memorial to that King's council, in which, among other things, they represent that, "It would be more advantageous for France to permit her ports on the ocean to carry on this trade directly to the Levant, without being obliged, ever since the year

[1] It was not my intention here to do more than merely to indicate them.

1669, to unlade at Marseilles, on their return, *under pretence* of preventing their bringing in the plague; *which has obliged them to relinquish that trade entirely*."

How much more heavily the disadvantages of these regulations have weighed upon the commerce of England, where, from its greater distance from the seat of the supposed infection, the pretext was still more unreasonable, I have already had occasion to shew.

Plague Police Establishments are a Source of great and pernicious Expenditure.

Previous to 1800, ships without clean bills of health were not admitted to entry in these kingdoms, unless after having performed quarantine in one of the principal foreign lazarettos (we had then none of our own,) in the Mediterranean. This regulation has existed since the first introduction of quarantine into this country, in 1720. From that period to the year 1800, quarantine, with clean bills of health, was performed in England, in old ships of war, called floating lazarets; and the expense borne by his Majesty's government.

In 1800, it being deemed expedient to remove the restrictions mentioned, an act, (39 and 40 Geo. III. c. 80,) was passed, authorizing ships to enter without clean bills of health; appropriating the sum of 65,000l. from the consolidated fund, for the establishment of a land lazaret at Chetney Hill, and imposing a tonnage duty upon the shipping employed in the Levant trade, to reimburse the cost of Chetney Hill, and to provide for the future expenses of quarantine, as well afloat as on shore.[2]

In 1805, this sum having been found insufficient, another act was passed, to make further provision, and to confirm the act of 1800 in all its conditions.

[1] Vide And. Com. Vol. III. p. 7.

[2] Experience of the comparative disadvantages arising to our commerce from the performance of quarantine, with foul bills of health, in the Mediterranean, and, perhaps, the difficulty of procuring access to the foreign lazarettos in war time, after France had extended her conquests, pointed out the expediency of transferring them to England: and, were these institutions useful, this measure would certainly have been an improvement. Its propriety was pointed out several years before it was carried into effect, in an able letter, addressed by the merchants of Smyrna, to Mr. Howard, and inserted at page 27 of his Account of the Principal Lazarettos of Europe. But if my conclusions be just, this transfer can now only be regarded as the improvement of an error.

Under the authority of these acts upwards of 250,000l. have, since 1800, been levied upon the trade of the Levant. The land lazaret remains still unfinished. And, after an expense has been incurred of between one and two hundred thousand pounds, in the purchase of lands, and the erection of works, doubts have even arisen respecting the healthiness of the situation.

Here, then, is a direct expense of from 16,000l. to 20,000l. a year entailed on the public for an object that is not simply useless, but injurious; for whether it be paid in the first instance by a duty on the Levant trade, or otherwise, the amount always comes ultimately from the pockets of the consumer.

This is an ascertained expenditure. But we know not how much has been advanced out of the consolidated or other funds, to support the quarantine establishments in this country, beyond what has been reimbursed by the tonnage duty levied upon the trade.

This is properly a subject of official inquiry, and the truth may be easily ascertained.

To the amount expended upon quarantine establishments at home, we have now to add that which is required for those of Malta, Gibraltar, and such as have recently devolved to us in the Ionian islands. The whole united cannot fall short of a hundred thousand pounds a year, and may possibly exceed two.

Were the expense indeed twenty times as great, there is no doubt that if these establishments could be shewn to be unequivocally useful, it ought and would be cheerfully borne. But as it has, I think, been proved, that whether contagion do or do not exist, they are insufficient for their object, and otherwise injurious, it follows that if the expense were only one twentieth part of the actual amount, it ought to be forthwith discontinued.

A

COPY

OF THE

REPORT

PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

BY

The COMMITTEE appointed to examine the several Petitions, which have been presented to The House, against the Employment of Boys in sweeping of Chimneys.

LONDON:

1817.

A COPY

OF THE

REPORT

PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

BY

THE COMMITTEE appointed to examine the several Petitions, which have been presented to The House, against the Employment of Boys in Sweeping Chimnies.

YOUR Committee have felt it their duty, in the first place, to inquire into the Laws that at present regulate the trade of Chimney Sweeping; and they find, that in the year 1788 an Act of Parliament (28 Geo. III. chap. 48.) was passed, intituled, "An Act for the better regulation of "Chimney Sweepers and their Apprentices." To the preamble of which, they wish to direct the attention of the House:—"Whereas the Laws now in being, respecting "Masters and Apprentices, do not provide sufficient regu- "lations, so as to prevent various complicated miseries to "which Boys employed in climbing and cleansing of "Chimnies are liable, beyond any other employment what- "soever in which Boys of tender years are engaged: and "whereas the misery of the said Boys might be much alle- "viated, if some legal powers and authorities were given "for the regulation of Chimney Sweepers and their Ap-

"prentices."—This Act, though it has in some respects fulfilled the intention of the Legislature, yet Your Committee have heard in evidence before them, that its principal enacting clause, viz. the regulating the age at which Apprentices shall be taken, is constantly evaded; and they are decidedly of opinion, that the various and complicated miseries to which the unfortunate children are exposed, cannot be relieved by regulations. The 28th of Geo. III. enacts, That no person shall employ any Boy, in the nature of an apprentice or servant, under the age of eight years; yet Your Committee have been informed, that infants of the early ages of four, five, and six years, have been employed, it being the practice for parents to sell their children to this trade, under-stating their age; besides, this clause is not considered by the Master Chimney Sweepers as prohibiting their employment of their own children; and instances have been adduced before Your Committee, that have satisfied them that such cases are by no means unfrequent. Your Committee have also heard, from one of the Master Chimney Sweepers, that it is the custom of the trade to take the parents' word for the age of the apprentice—that no other evidence is asked for—that he never heard of its being the practice of the Masters to get a certificate of the age, and he was ignorant that the Act of Parliament required it. Your Committee refer generally to the evidence for proofs of the cruelties that are practised, and of the ill-usage, and the peculiar hardships that are the lot of the wretched children who are employed in this trade. It is in evidence that they are stolen from their parents, and inveigled out of workhouses; that in order to conquer the natural repugnance of the infants to ascend the narrow and dangerous chimnies, to clean which their labour is required, blows are used; that pins are forced into their feet by the boy that follows them up the chimney, in order

to compel them to ascend it; and that lighted straw has been applied for that purpose; that the children are subject to sores and bruises, and wounds and burns on their thighs, knees, and elbows; and that it will require many months before the extremities of the elbows and knees become sufficiently hard to resist the excoriations to which they are at first subject; and that one of the Masters being asked if those Boys are employed in sweeping chimnies during the soreness of those parts, he answered, "it depends upon the sort of Master they have got. Some are obliged to put them to work sooner than others; you must keep them a little at it even during the sores, or they will never learn their business." Your Committee are informed that the deformity of the spine, legs, arms, &c., of these Boys, proceeds generally, if not wholly, from the circumstance of their being obliged to ascend chimnies at an age when their bones are in a soft and growing state; but likewise, by their being compelled to carry bags of soot and cloths, the weight of which sometimes exceeds 20 or 30 pounds not including the soot, the burthen of which they also occasionally bear for a great length of distance and time; the knees and ancle joints become deformed, in the first instance, from the position they are obliged to put them in, in order to support themselves, not only while climbing up the chimney, but more particularly so whilst coming down, when they rest solely on the lower extremities, the arms being used for scraping and sweeping down the soot. Your Committee refer generally to the observation of every one as to the stinted growth, the deformed state of body, the look of wretchedness and disease which characterizes this unfortunate class; but it is in evidence before them, that there is a formidable complaint which Chimney Sweepers in particular are liable to; from which circumstance, by way of distinction, it is called the Chim-

ney Sweepers' Cancer. Mr. *Wright*, a Surgeon, informed Your Committee, that whilst he was attending Guy's and Saint Bartholomew's Hospitals, he had several cases under his care, some of which were operated on; but in general they are apt to let them go too far before they apply for relief. Cancers of the lips are not so general as cancers of the scrotum; the witness never saw but two instances of the former, though several of the latter. Mr. *Cline* informed Your Committee by letter, that this disease is rarely seen in any other persons than Chimney Sweepers, and in them cannot be considered as frequent; for during his practice in St. Thomas's Hospital, for more than 40 years, the number of those cases could not exceed 20; but Your Committee have been informed, that the dread of the operation which it is necessary to perform, deters many from submitting to it; and from the evidence of persons engaged in the trade, it appears to be much more common than Mr. Cline seems to be aware of. But it is not only the early and hard labour, the spare diet, wretched lodging, and harsh treatment, which is the lot of these children, but in general they are kept almost entirely destitute of education, and moral or religious instruction; they form a sort of class by themselves, and from their work being done early in the day, they are turned into the streets to pass their time in idleness and depravity: thus they become an easy prey to those whose occupation it is to delude the ignorant and entrap the unwary; and if their constitution is strong enough to resist the diseases and deformities which are the consequences of their trade, and that they should grow so much in stature as no longer to be useful in it, they are cast upon the world without any means of obtaining a livelihood, with no habits of industry, or rather, what too frequently happens, with confirmed habits of idleness and vice.

In addition to which, it appears, that from the trade being constantly overstocked, a large proportion of the older Chimney Sweepers (as it is stated, one half) are constantly in a course of being thrown out of employ. Your Committee have endeavoured to learn the number of persons who may be considered as engaged in the trade within the Bills of Mortality: they have learnt that the total number of Master Chimney Sweepers might be estimated at 200, who had among them 500 apprentices; that not above 20 of those masters were reputable tradesmen in easy circumstances, who appeared generally to conform to the provisions of the Act, and which 20 had, upon an average, from 4 to 5 apprentices each; that about 90 were of an inferior class of Master Chimney Sweepers, who had, upon an average, three apprentices each, and who were extremely negligent of their health, their morals, and their education; and that about 90, the remainder of the 200 Masters, were a class of Chimney Sweepers recently journeymen, who took up the trade because they had no other resource—who picked up boys as they could—who lodged them with themselves in huts, sheds, and cellars, in the outskirts of the town, occasionally wandering into the villages round: and that in these two classes, being in the proportion of 180 to 20, the miseries of the trade were principally to be found. It is in evidence before Your Committee, that at Hadleigh, Barnet, Uxbridge, and Windsor, female children have been employed.

Your Committee observe, that in general among the most respectable part of the trade, the apprentices are of the age prescribed by the Act, viz. from 8 to 14; but even among the most respectable it is the constant practice to borrow the younger boys from one another, for the purpose of sweeping what are called the narrow flues. No accurate account could be obtained of the ages of the ap-

prentices of the other classes; but they had the youngest children, who either were their own, or engaged as apprentices; and who, in many instances, it was ascertained, were much below the prescribed age: thus, the youngest and most delicate children are in the service of the worst class of masters, and employed exclusively to clean flues, which, from their peculiar construction, cannot be swept without great personal hazard.

Your Committee have had laid before them an account of various accidents that have happened to Chimney Sweepers, by being forced to ascend these small flues: They beg leave to refer particularly to a recent case, which occurred on Thursday the 6th day of March 1817, and which is contained in the Minutes of Evidence: They wish also to direct the attention of the House to one of those instances of cruelty, which terminated in the death of an infant of about six years of age, in the month of April 1816: *William Moles* and *Sarah* his wife were tried at the Old Bailey for the wilful murder of *John Hewley* alias *Hasely*, by cruelly beating him. Under the direction of the learned judge, they were acquitted of the crime of murder, but the husband was detained to take his trial for a misdemeanor, of which he was convicted upon the fullest evidence, and sentenced to two years imprisonment. The facts of the case were, that this infant was forced up the chimney on the shoulder of a larger boy, and afterwards violently pulled down again by the leg and dashed against a marble hearth; his leg was thus broken, and he died a few hours after; on his body and knees were found sores arising from wounds of a much older date. But it is not only the ill-treatment which the regular apprentices suffer from the cruel conduct of some masters, that Your Committee are anxious to comment on; it appears that in order to evade the penalty of the Act of Parliament, some of these masters

frequently hire young lads as journeymen who have not been apprenticed to Chimney Sweepers; these are children who have no parents, and who are enticed away from the different workhouses of the Metropolis.

Having thus shortly detailed the leading facts of the evidence which has been given before them, of the miseries which the unfortunate class of beings who are sold to this trade experience, Your Committee have with great anxiety examined various persons, as to the possibility of performing by the aid of machinery what is now done by the labour of the Climbing Boys: the result of their inquiries is, that though there may be some difference of opinion as to the extent to which machinery is here applicable, yet the lowest calculation of practical and experienced persons, Master Chimney Sweepers themselves, who have been brought up in the trade, establishes the fact, that of the chimnies in the metropolis three-fourths may be as well, as cleanly, and as cheaply swept by mechanical means as by the present method; and the remaining part being, on the very greatest calculation, one-fourth of the whole number, with alterations that may easily and cheaply be made, can be swept also without the employment of the Climbing Boy. Mr. *Bevans*, an architect much conversant with buildings in the metropolis, has no doubt that 95 out of 100 can be swept by the machines that are at present in use; and he has also no doubt that, supposing there was to be a legislative enactment that no chimney should be swept by the means of Climbing Boys, that easy substitutes could be found that would sweep every chimney that now exists. He adds, that though there may be difficulties in cleaning an horizontal flue, from the quantity of soot, yet it is equally bad for the boys as for the machine; because the boy, as he comes down, has an accumulation of soot about him, which stops up the circulation of air necessary

to support life. So that it is evident, in all those chimnies where, under their present construction, the machine cannot be used, the hazard of loss of life to the boy who sweeps them is most imminent.

Some of these flues are stated not to be above seven inches square; and one of the witnesses, who relates this fact to the Committee, informs them that he himself had been often in hazard of his life; and that he has frequently swept a long narrow flue in Goldsmiths' Hall, in which he was shut up six hours before his work was finished. Upon a review then of the evidence of the evils necessarily belonging to this trade, as well as of the remedies which have been suggested,—First, in the substitution of mechanical means, thus superseding the necessity of employing children in this painful and degrading trade; and, Secondly, in allowing the system to continue in the main as it is, with only those amendments to the existing law, that may attempt to remedy the present practice;—Your Committee are decidedly of opinion, that no Parliamentary regulations can attain this desirable end; that as long as Master Chimney Sweepers are permitted to employ Climbing Boys, the natural result of that permission will be the continuance of those miseries which the Legislature has sought, but which it has failed to put an end to; they therefore recommend, that the use of Climbing Boys should be prohibited altogether; and that the age at which the apprenticeship should commence should be extended from eight to fourteen, putting this trade upon the same footing as others which take apprentices at that age; and, finally, Your Committee have come to the following Resolution:

Resolved,

That the Chairman be directed to move for leave to bring in a Bill for preventing the further use of Climbing Boys in sweeping of Chimnies.

23 *June*, 1817.

REASONS

FOR A

FARTHER AMENDMENT

OF THE

ACT 54 GEO. III. c. 156.

BEING AN ACT TO AMEND

THE COPYRIGHT ACT

OF

QUEEN ANNE.

BY SIR EGERTON BRYDGES, BART. M. P.

LONDON:

1817.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In consequence of the Motion which the Author is about to bring forward in the House of Commons for Leave to bring in a Bill to amend the late Copyright Act, which was passed on the 29th of July, 1814, he has been induced to put into print the following *Reasons*, though very hastily drawn; conceiving that a due and leisurely consideration of them will prove their force and justice.

London, June 17, 1817.

REASONS

FOR A FARTHER AMENDMENT,

&c. &c.

IN the following pages I propose, briefly to enquire into the history and provisions of the Act 54 Geo. III. c. 156, entitled, "*An Act to amend the several Acts for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the Copies and Copyrights of Printed Books, to the Authors of such Books or their Assigns:*" for the purpose of ascertaining,

1. Whether the said Act has answered the purposes, and produced the remedies, for which it was passed?

2. Whether it has not created, either intentionally, or from some incorrectness in the wording of it, new grievances, so considerable as to call loudly for another interference of Parliament?

It would now be wasting time to establish by authority or argument the property which an Author has in the issue of his own brain. The principle of Copyright is no longer disputed, either as a matter of justice or law. The difficulty has arisen in devising means to enforce and protect that right.

The best and clearest account of this may be given in a passage extracted from some lately recovered Letters of Thomas Carte, the Historian, on this subject, published in 1735, when a Bill was brought in, to render the Act of Queen Anne more effectual.

"To call the securing of this property an unjust design, and an

invasion of the natural rights of mankind, will scarce appear a true suggestion to any one that considers the natural right which Authors have in their Works, and the legal right which both they and their assigns have in their Copies. 'Tis certain that no printer, since the invention of the art of printing, ever had, in England, a right to print the Works of another man, without his consent. There ever was a property in all Books here printed; and for the making of it known, the better to prevent all invasion thereof, when the Stationers were incorporated,[1] all Authors, and the proprietors to whom they sold their Copies, constantly entered them in the Register of that Company, as their property. The like method was taken with regard to Foreign Books, to which no subject of England could pretend an original right. To prevent the inconveniencies of different persons engaging (perhaps unknown to one another) in printing of the same work (which might prove the ruin of both), the person who first resolved on it, and entered his design in that Register, became thereby the legal proprietor of such Work, and had the sole right of printing it: so that there has scarce ever been a Book published in England, but it belonged to some Author or Proprietor, exclusive of all other persons. This is evident to every one that hath ever viewed the Stationers' Register, from the erection of that Company, down to the year 1710, when the Act 8 *Annae* was passed, which refers to this as an usual practice. It was indeed so customary, that I hardly think there ever was a Book (unless of a seditious nature) printed till within *forty years* last past,[2] but, however inconsiderable it was for size or value, the property thereof was ascertained, and the sole right of printing it secured to the proprietor by such an entry. I was surprised on carefully examining one of the Registers of Queen Elizabeth's time, from 1576 to 1595, to find, even in the infancy of English printing, above 2000 Copies of Books, entered as the property of particular persons, either in the whole, or in shares; and mentioned from time to time, to descend, be sold, and be conveyed to others; and the whole tenor of these Registers is a clear proof of Authors and Proprietors having

[1] The Stationers' Company were incorporated in 1556.

[2] This was written in 1785.

always enjoyed a sole and exclusive right of printing their copies, and that no other person whatever was allowed to invade their right."

It becomes, however, a matter, not of mere curiosity, but of great use to the purposes of the present discussion, to trace the progress of the steps *in Parliament* for the protection of Copyright. It will a little surprise those who have been misled, by the advocates for the Universities, to believe that the claims of those Universities have been an inseparable condition coetaneous with the interference of Parliament in the protection of Copyright, to learn that nearly seventy years before the act of Q. Anne, Parliament unequivocally declared the property of Copyright, and denounced penalties for the infringement of it. And this, without requiring the tax of a single copy.

"If ever," (continues the Letter-writer in 1735,) "there was a danger of the invasion of Copyright, it was in 1641, when the licentiousness of the press was carried to the greatest height; and there wanted not persons to insinuate to the Members of the then House of Commons, that it would be convenient to lay all Copies open for every printer that pleased to publish them. On this occasion, Featley, Burges, Gouge, Byfield, Calamy, Seaman, and several other divines, favourites of the prevailing party in that House, thought it proper to sign a paper, declaring, 'that, to their knowledge, very considerable sums of money had been paid by Stationers and Printers to many Authors, for the Copies of such useful Books as had been imprinted; in regard whereof (they say) we conceive it to be both just and necessary that they should enjoy a property for the sole imprinting of their Copies: and we further declare, that, unless they do so enjoy a property, all Scholars will be utterly deprived of any recompense from the Stationers or Printers, for their studies or labour in writing or preparing Books for the press. Besides, if the Books that are printed in England be suffered to be imported from beyond the seas, or any other way re-imprinted to the prejudice of those who bear the charge of the impressions, the Authors and the Buyers will be abused by vicious impressions, to the great discouragement of learned men, and extreme damage of all kinds of good learning.'

"These and other reasons had so much weight with both

Houses of Parliament, that on Wednesday, June 14, 1643, they joined in an ORDINANCE, declaring, 'That no Book, Pamphlet, nor Paper, nor part of such Book, Pamphlet, or Paper, shall from henceforth be printed, bound, stitched, or put to sale by any person or persons whatsoever, unless the same be entered in the Register Book of the Company of Stationers, *according to ancient custom*; and that no person or persons shall hereafter print, or cause to be reprinted, any Book or Books, or part of Book or Books, entered in the Register of the said Company for any particular Member thereof, *without the licence and consent of the owner and owners thereof*; nor yet import any such Book or Books, or part of Book or Books, formerly printed here, from beyond the seas, upon pain of forfeiting the same to the respective owner or owners of the said copies, and such further punishment as shall be thought fit.' The like Ordinance was made 20 Sept. 1649; 7 Jan. 1652; and 28 Aug. 1655. *See Scobel's Acts*, p. 92: and 230.

"Thus (the writer continues) was the Proprietors' sole right of printing their Copies acknowledged and asserted by a Parliament, that made it their business to destroy all monopolies; and would not have established this exclusive right, if they had not considered it (as it really is) a matter of property."

The next step was the *Licensing Act* 13 and 14 Car. II. c. 33, of which the main object was to control the Liberty of the Press: but which chose to disguise that object by mixing it up with a renewal of the objects of the above Ordinance. It enacts, that "no person or persons shall, within this Kingdom, or elsewhere, imprint, or cause to be imprinted; nor shall import, or bring in, or cause to be imported, or brought into the Kingdom, *from or out of any other his Majesty's dominions*, nor from any other parts beyond the seas; any Copy or Copies, Book or Books, or part of any Book or Books, printed beyond the seas or elsewhere, which any person or persons, by force or virtue of any entry or entries thereof duly made or to be made in the Register Book of the Company of Stationers, have or shall have the right, privilege, authority, or allowance, solely to print, *without the consent of the owner or owners of such Book or Books, Copy or Copies*; nor shall bind, stitch, or put to sale, any such Book or Books, or part of any Book or Books, without the like consent, upon pain of loss or forfeiture of the same, and of

being proceeded against as an offender against this present Act," (the penalty whereof was, for the first offence, a disability for three years, and for the second offence a disability for ever, to exercise the art of printing, besides bodily punishment at the Judges pleasure,) "and upon the further penalty and forfeiture of six shillings and eight-pence for every such Book or Books, or part of such Book or Books, Copy or Copies, so imprinted, imported, bound, stitched, or put to sale," &c.

It was by this Licensing Act that a delivery of Copies was first enacted. But the number was only THREE: and these were to the King's Library, and the two Universities of Cambridge and Oxford; not for the encouragement of Learning; not as a consideration for the privileges given by that Act;—which, though it recognised the titles to Copies against intruders, (a property which the Law of Parliament had previously enforced with equal strength, unalloyed by any such condition) was so far from an Act of Bounty, that it has ever since been branded with infamy for its usurpation of the free rights of the Press;—but unquestionably for the purpose of furnishing the Ministers of State, and the Vice-Chancellors of the two Universities, with better means to put in force the despotic provisions of that Act.

This Licensing Act was renewed from time to time; viz. 16, 17, 18 Car. II. and 1 Jac. II. and continued in force till some years after the Revolution, when it was suffered to expire. Piracies then grew so frequent, that at length the Act 8 *Anne* was passed, to put an end to them.

"The world," says the Letter-writer in 1735, "was so generally sensible of an Author's right and property in his work, that it was never invaded till about forty years ago (1695), when pirating of books first began to be practised. To remedy this evil, Authors, thinking that the prerogative of the Crown would keep pirates in awe, and restrain them from invading their property, had recourse to a *Royal Privilege*, which, out of an extreme caution to prevent all disputes, (for disputed rights, to Authors unable to bear the expenses of Law, are worse than none at all) they desired only for a term of *fourteen* years; for which the Crown was allowed, by the Act against Monopolies,[1] to grant a privilege,

[1] 21 Jac. I. c. 3.

even in cases where the natural rights of mankind were restrained. This did not prove effectual, because no penalty attached to it; and there was a great deal of trouble, expense, and loss of time (things very uneasy to Authors) in obtaining such privileges. To exempt Authors from such inconveniences, and in hopes that pirates would pay more regard to a *Parliamentary* privilege than they had done to a *Royal* one, (as the late Mr. BROMLEY[1] told) the Act 8 *Anne* was brought in, for securing the property of Authors by such a privilege. But as the penalty of one penny a sheet was too little when no costs of suit were given; and *as there were various other defects in that Act;* Authors, out of fear that it would be the sole rule of judgment to the Courts of Law in such cases, and that if through any defect of form in the proceedings they should be nonsuited, or be obliged to discontinue their action, they should be exposed to costs of suit, (which that Act gives to the Pirate, but does not allow to the Author) were afraid to run the hazard and expense of a law-suit. Whoever considers these things, must surely think an Author's case very deplorable, who, after all his pains and expense, and perhaps the merit of being useful to the world, is equally in danger of being ruined by sitting down calmly under an injury, or by suing for redress and reparation. To supply those defects is the intent of the present Bill:" viz. *the Bill in* 1735, *for rendering more effectual the Act of Queen Anne.*

The Act of Q. Anne apparently took for its model the Parliamentary Ordinance of 1643, and that part of the Licensing Act which was founded on it, following the last in the demand for the three copies to the King's Library, and to Cambridge and Oxford. In its passage through the Commons, two more copies were added, viz. for Sion College, and for the University of Edinburgh.

In the Lords, four more copies were added for Scotland—for the other Universities of that Kingdom, and for the Advocates' Library. The two copies for Ireland have been given by a new act, subsequent to the Union with that country.

This act, however, was soon found to be very faulty, and still left Authors open to the depredations of piracy. At length, a bill

[1] The Speaker, I presume.

for rendering this act more effectual was brought in, and passed the Commons, in April 1735. It was afterwards thrown out in the Lords.

This bill was apparently drawn, and advocated by many printed letters, by Thomas Carte, the Historian, whose papers on the subject have within these three weeks fallen into my hands; and furnished me with the large extracts given in the preceding pages.

In 1813 and 1814, the owners of Copyright sought an amendment of the act of Q. Anne, according to the construction given to it by the Court of King's Bench in 1812, in the case of the University of Cambridge and Bryer, by which it was decided that the Universities were entitled to eleven copies of every work printed and published, or re-published with additions, whether entered at Stationers' Hall or not.

This was a claim which had never been in the contemplation of either party, from the passing the act in the reign of Queen Anne till 1805, when such a construction of the act was first put forth by Mr. Montagu, or Professor Christian. The owners of Copyright felt that if such was the correct construction of the act, as it stood, they were entitled to petition Parliament to amend what was so obviously contrary to the intention of all parties; and at the same time so grievous a burden on them, and such a discouragement to literature.

The claimants, however, of the eleven copies felt resolved to surrender nothing of the advantages thus gained; and being powerful bodies, widely connected with every part of the Empire, they carried on their opposition with too much success.

The petitioners urged the justice of their title to relief by various statements and proofs in print as well as otherwise, to which no answer was made which has ever appeared to my mind to carry even plausibility. They prayed, that, if the tax was to be levied where no protection was even asked, the wantonness of demand might at least be checked by the claimants being ordered to pay some small proportion (say a third or a fourth) of the price. The claimants would yield nothing. They said: "We will have every thing, whether you ask protection or not: and we will pay nothing!"

One little boon was however at last extorted from them. The *nine*

copies, which were to be delivered under certain circumstances by the act of Queen Anne, were to be *on the best paper*. It was now conceded, that after rivetting all the other conditions of the act ten times stronger than the former act had rivetted them, and settling other doubtful parts of the original act in their favour, which embraced objects of the first value,[1] that all except the British Museum would be content to take their copies *of the paper on which the largest number or impression of each book should be printed for sale*; whereas by the act of Queen Anne the nine copies were to be *upon the best paper*.

One more boon, indeed, they were disposed in their generosity to assent to: but let it be observed, that it was what they had no concern, interest, nor pretence of title to withhold;—it being a matter not between the copyright owners and them, but between the copyright owners and the public. This was extending the right of copy for the second fourteen years, which the act of Queen Anne made contingent on the event of the Author's surviving the first fourteen years, *absolute*; and should the Author outlive the twenty-eight years, extending it to the end of his life.

But he must be a shallow reasoner who can set up this last boon as any ground for increasing or rivetting the claims of the Universities. If Authors have (as will scarcely be disputed) a right and a property in the fruits of their own intellects, the Universities can have no claim to put a tax for their own emolument on the legal protection of that property. If giving to Authors the sole enjoyment of their own labours be an impolitic monopoly, which infringes on public rights, the payment to the Universities of a heavy impost for that monopoly, is no justification to the public for an infringement of their interests.

The whole evidence of the Committee, after a laborious examination of the most competent and best-informed witnesses, went to prove, by testimony which was vainly attempted to be explained away, that the burden of eleven copies delivered to Stationers' Hall, is

[1] It was, I believe, doubtful whether the claimants were entitled under the act of Q. Anne to the prints and maps accompanying books, there being no words in that act to such effect. The new act added the words, "*with all maps and prints belonging thereto.*"

22 per cent.	where	50 copies	are taken.
11	-	-	100
$4\frac{3}{4}$	-	-	250
$2\frac{1}{5}$	-	-	500, &c.

It was objected, and still continues to be objected to this, by the advocates for the Universities, that the real loss is no more than the cost of the paper on which the eleven copies are printed.

The reply is, the assertion of the fact which was proved in the Committee, that pressmen, by an invariable ancient custom, charge by portions of 250, and allow no subdivision of that number: and that it is in vain to attempt to alter this, unless the Legislature will interfere with the regulation of wages, which it certainly will not do.

But this is not all; there is the ink, the wear of types, and frequently the colouring of prints, and other incidents, as well as the paper; which, even if the pressman's charge were not additional, make the costs of the eleven additional copies of expensive works very serious.

But this grievance,—though I think it much too serious to be endured for the benefit of those who have no colour of principle, as far as my mind can discover, on which to ground it,—is light compared with another evil consequent on those claims, to which I wish to draw the attention. This tax not only takes away eleven copies from the stock, often 11 out of 100, sometimes 11 out of 40 or 50, or even a smaller number, but it does what is much worse; it takes away a great number of purchasers, (I should say at least 100) from the market for the sale of the remainder. I am confident that there is no one person of intelligence and good sense, practically and minutely acquainted with the present state and fashion of the literature of the Empire, who will not agree in this. Surely it is a very moderate computation that that book, when in the possession of a public Library, will supply the uses and satisfy the curiosity of nine readers, which, if in private hands, will only answer the purposes of one.

In addition to this, it not only changes, but absolutely extinguishes, the ardour of private collectors, as far as regards new books. They who collect from vanity, cannot feed that passion by spending their money in this way. A large portion of those

who want books for use, will never waste their money in the purchase of expensive books, when they are certain they can find them at any one of the Public Libraries, and have a free use of them there.

It is well and truly said by Mr. Sharon Turner, in his pamphlet on this bill, 1813, that "it is an universal principle of public taste, that things shall be valued in proportion as they are rare. That which every one may have, scarcely any one cares for. This is as true in literature as in every other object of natural or artificial production. It is useless to condemn the taste as irrational; so men feel, and so they will act. Hence in most of the expensive and important publications, the number must be made as few as possible to answer at all: otherwise that price will not be given for the work which can alone indemnify the Author. Hence the addition of eleven copies will frequently seriously operate to the deterioration of a work when only a few are printed."

These predicted evils were vainly urged by the petitioners, when the amended bill, as it now stands, was offered to them. They said, "We ask relief, and you aggravate our burdens!" But the bill was forced upon them. They were told that the public bodies would exercise their claims mildly and liberally; that they would take lists, and only call for such books as they absolutely wanted! that their main object was to establish their right! but trust them, and it should be seen how they would use power!"

See, indeed, how they use it!!! Look at the last return of eleven copies of 2100 articles in 22 months! And see the portentous note at the end, which I here copy.

"*Of those works, against which the eleven copies are placed, the whole number were left at the time of making the entry; and of those works against which no numbers are prefixed, ten copies were demanded of all, for the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Sion College, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, St. Andrew's, and Trinity College, Dublin; and for the Libraries of the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh, and the King's Inns, Dublin; excepting* MUSIC *and* NOVELS; *as of those latter works the Advocates' Library and Trinity College decline the claim.*

"*The British Museum have a Copy of every Work that is entered!*"

Upon these facts I am bound to ask, though some of the Public

Bodies may affect to repel the question indignantly, what do they do with this indiscriminate mixture of expensive and useful Works and contemptible trash? Where do they deposit them? Do they keep them in order? And do they bind them? If they do, would not the funds expended in paying the binder, the house-room, and the librarians for thus dealing with the mass of rubbish, be more generously and more usefully expended in paying some small portion of the price of the valuable works? If they do not, what becomes of the only alleged colour for their claim—that of public use?

It is clear then that from the form in which the Act of 54 Geo. III. to amend the Act of Q. Anne, was finally passed, and from the manner in which its provisions have since been enforced, instead of affording relief to Authors and Publishers, it has aggravated their grievances on the very points on which they sought a remedy.

But it has done more: it has added a new burden on articles which were quite free before, and where they did not even dream of it, till months after the Act had passed.

The Act of Queen Anne only embraced a claim to such Works as were first printed and published, or reprinted with additions, subsequent to that Act. The amended Act was clearly intended to be confined in the same way to Works printed or published subsequent to its date. In the first enacting Clause it so stood, as the Bill was originally printed; and so continued after its commitment, and again after its first re-commitment. But it appears on a minute examination that on a subsequent re-commitment, which took place between 10 and 12 at night, on 12 July 1814, the words which up to that period had stood "which from and after *the passing this Act shall be FIRST printed and published*" were altered to, "*shall be printed and published*," the important word FIRST being then struck out. The alleged ground of this omission, as far as any memory of it can be gathered, was its being surplusage, inasmuch as it was urged that the next clause, which regarded second and other subsequent editions, provided against a claim for any addition but the *first*. This foolishly enough lulled those who were watching the interests of the Petitioners asleep. For, lo! the last clause,

only provides against the claims of second and subsequent editions of works to be published after the passing of the Act.

There is little doubt that the Universities had this extension of claim in their view. For not many months had passed before they astonished the booksellers by laying claim to eleven Copies of the Reprints of certain large and expensive Publications of Books of ancient English literature then in course of publication.

The Booksellers took a legal opinion: but the Act as worded could not be resisted: and they were obliged again to submit.

Now this is a case in which I trust the Legislature will not hesitate to give relief. To continue to extend the claims to Reprints of works of this class, must be a most wanton cupidity; and must entirely extinguish such useful undertakings in future.

All therefore that I would propose at present, to correct the imperfections and most striking hardships of the last Act, and to obviate the new grievance with regard to Reprints of old books, is to enact a Clause such as stood in the present Act, in its early stages, that no copies should be demandable where the whole impression did not exceed copies: or at least to require in such cases a payment of a third or half the price, and to restore the word FIRST as it originally stood before the words "printed and published," in the principal Clause, which immediately follows the Preamble.

At the same time there should be necessary a specific demand from every Public Body for every Book which they require, *nominatim:* and not a mere sweeping order for every thing published.

Appendix, No. I. contains a List of Books amounting in price to 20*s.* and upwards, (exclusive of Novels), of which Eleven Copies have been claimed and received by the Public Libraries—extracted from the List of Publications entered at Stationers' Hall from the 12th of June, 1815, to the 31st of March 1817.

The Total Amount of all the Books claimed during this period, of which the price could be ascertained, is 8662*l.* 6*s.* 4*d.*

Appendix, No. 2. contains from Messrs. Longman and Co. a list of 23 Books (most of them Reprints) published by them since the passing of the late amended Copyright Act in 1814, of which the impressions in no case exceeded 250—in most cases were confined to 200— and in some to 125, and 100.

Appendix, No. 3. treats on the Extension of the Term of Copyright.

Appendix, No. 4. contains a Letter to Sir Egerton Brydges from Messrs. Lackington.

Appendix, No. 5. contains a Copy of a Printed Circular Requisition from Stationers' Hall, with a Copy of a Note of Delivery, and Receipt annexed.

Appendix, No. 6. treats on the supposed Bargain with Scotland.

Appendix, No. 7. treats on the limited Demand for Copies.

Appendix, No. 8. contains an Extract from the Gentleman's Magazine for June 1817.

A

PAPER

ON THE MEANS OF

REDUCING THE POORS RATES,

AND OF AFFORDING

EFFECTUAL AND PERMANENT

RELIEF TO THE LABOURING CLASSES,

Presented to the Chairman of the Committee on the Poor Laws.

BY MAJOR TORRENS.

ORIGINAL.

LONDON.

1817.

A

PAPER,

&c. &c.

THAT the poors rate of England, advancing as it does, at a perpetually accelerating pace, and threatening in its ultimate progress, to absorb the whole rental of the country, is an enormous and insupportable evil, seems now to be universally acknowledged. The laws, however, by which parochial support is afforded, have been so long in operation, and the habits and conduct of the people have been to so great an extent determined and regulated by their influence, that to eradicate them from our political system requires the most cautious and skilful management. Their cancerous roots have now been permitted to strike so deep, that there is danger lest, if attempted by persons not sufficiently acquainted with the structure of society, the operation which extracts them should touch the vitals of the state.

It may be laid down as an incontrovertible position, that in an old and populous country, where the good and well-situated lands have been already appropriated and occupied, the people cannot be rendered comfortable and independent,

unless means are adopted for regulating the population so as to keep down the supply of labour to a level with the demand. If, in any district, there is a capital sufficient to create a demand for a thousand labourers, while the supply amounts to no more than nine hundred, then it is self-evident that wages will be high, and that the labouring classes will possess all the necessaries, and some of the superfluities of life. But, on the other hand, if the capital employed affords a demand for no more than nine hundred labourers, while the supply amounts to a thousand, then it is equally self-evident, that the competition of the labourers to obtain work, will reduce wages below what is necessary for the comfortable support of a family, and that poverty and starvation must prevail. Nor is it possible, as the following illustrative case will demonstrate, for human wisdom to devise a plan of relief which can obviate this result, and bestow any permanent comfort and independence on a people whose numbers are not limited by the demand for labour.

Let a district be supposed, in which rent, profit, and wages, amount each to £1000 per ann. and where the labouring classes exert no prudential check upon the increase of their numbers, but breed up to the starving point. Now it is self-evident, that beyond this point their numbers cannot go; and that if there should be neither emigration, nor a prudential check, regulating the number of births, want and misery, and the diseases which they engender, must annually cut off the excess of population, and apportion the supply of labour to the demand. Now, let the more wealthy inhabitants of the district endeavour to obviate this most unhappy result; let the land proprietors and capitalists, in compassion for the distress of the labouring class, deprive themselves of a portion of the superfluities they have been accustomed to enjoy, and

devote a tenth of their incomes to remove the poverty of those who live by wages. The relief which this would afford would be immediate, but unfortunately, it would be of short duration. As giving a tenth of the incomes arising out of rent and profit, in aid of the incomes derived from wages, could have no conceivable tendency either to promote emigration, or to regulate the number of births, the people would continue to breed up to the extreme limit of subsistence; that is, until their numbers became so great, that the earnings of labour, aided by the contributions from rent and profit, would be just sufficient to support their actual numbers; and until, in consequence, want and misery prevented all farther increase, and rendered the deaths exactly equal to the births. If, on witnessing this renewal of distress, the land proprietors and capitalists should consent to give twenty, instead of ten per cent, upon their incomes, in aid of wages, the same progress would be repeated;—temporary relief would be again administered, and permanent misery would again return. If thirty, forty, fifty, nay, if an hundred per cent were yielded by the land proprietors and capitalists, and the whole both of rent and of profit were given in aid of wages, the process and the result would, with respect to the labouring classes, be precisely as before. Population would increase until the wages of labour, aided by the whole rent and profits of the district, were no more than sufficient to support the actual number of labourers, and until want and misery prevented their increase.

But although this Ultra Spencean system, which thus distributed among the mass of the people, not only all the rent, but also all the profit, created in the district, could afford no permanent relief to the labouring class, it would inflict the greatest injury and degradation upon the whole community. In the first place, when a country possesses,

in the form of rent and profit, a surplus revenue beyond what is necessary to subsist the population, it may, when a deficient harvest occurs, export a portion of its luxuries and refined manufactures, in exchange for provisions, and thus avert the miseries of famine. But when rent and profit, instead of existing in a net surplus revenue, are given in aid of wages, and when, in consequence, the people (as will inevitably be the case unless there is a prudential check upon population) breed up to that point at which the whole revenue of the country is absorbed in mere subsistence, then there cannot be by possibility any surplus articles for exportation: the universal poverty of the people must render the purchase of foreign corn impracticable, and deficient crops must inevitably lead to famine.

In the second place, partitioning rents and profits amongst the people would speedily destroy all leisure, would put a stop to every species of intellectual culture, and would confine each and all to the business of providing for merely animal wants. This admits of the clearest demonstration. Supposing that each labourer in the country earns £30 per annum, and that these earnings are just sufficient to allow the existing population to be kept up. Then if, by making an equal partition of the rental of the country, we were to increase the income of each labourer to £60 per ann.: the infallible consequence would be (the partition of rent having no conceivable tendency to give operation to a preventive check on procreation) that the number of labourers would rapidly increase. Now this increase in the supply of labour would, by a two-fold operation, deteriorate the condition of the labourer. In the first place, it would lower wages; and in the second place, it would cause the rental of the country to be partitioned among a greater number of persons, and thus reduce the dividend of each. Nor, in the absence of prudential controul,

would there be any limit to the increase of numbers, and the consequent deterioration of the condition of the people, until the earnings of the labourer, and his dividend of rent, were reduced so low that, taken together, they were no more than sufficient to keep up the existing population. When things had arrived at this point,—when the earnings of incessant toil, aided by each individual portion of rent, were no more than sufficient to supply animal want, it is obvious that there could be neither leisure for intellectual pursuit, nor demand for the productions of art. Not a single mind would be left to cultivate the field of thought. The progress of knowledge would be arrested; nay, so far from the human mind being, under such circumstances, capable of farther advance, the attainments it had already achieved would speedily be lost, and the darkest barbarism return.

These objections to Spencean projects for partitioning the rent or net produce of a country, apply in all their force to a plan which Mr. Owen of Lanark, has recently brought forward for the purpose of affording general relief. This gentleman belongs to the order of political Alchymists; and seriously believing that he holds the philosopher's stone in one hand, and the universal medicine in the other, he walks forth to produce unlimited opulence, and to eradicate every disorder which is incident to human society. His confident anticipations of success, when contrasted with the slender, and completely inadequate means by which he proposes to accomplish it, are singularly amusing. The principles on which his plan proceeds, and which it pleases him to call fundamental, if they be not absolutely absurd, are at least directly contrary to experience. He tells us, that the amount of the ordinary labour of individuals, judiciously directed to objects of a productive nature, would be more than sufficient to maintain them in a high

degree of comfort; and that human exertion, if properly directed, would increase the objects of desire almost to infinity, and thus enable each to obtain all that is necessary to his well-being. Now it happens that these fundamental principles of Mr. Owen, are at variance with the most obvious and incontrovertible facts of political science. The soil of any country, however fertile, or however cultivated, can support only a given number of inhabitants. Each additional quantity of labour which is applied, yields a less proportional return; that is, if, on any given surface, the labour of 10 men will raise subsistence for 20, then the labour of 20 will not raise from it subsistence for 40, nor that of 30, subsistence for 60; but, on the contrary, the labour of 20 may not be able to raise food for more than 35, and that of 30 for more than 40. From this it necessarily follows, that there must always be a point, at which an additional quantity of labour bestowed upon the soil, will not raise an additional quantity of food sufficient to support the persons by whom it is performed; and hence the inherent properties of the soil present a natural obstacle to the indefinite increase of the objects of our want and desire, which no possible direction or application of human labour can surmount. If we were to concede to Mr. Owen the principle, that combined, is somewhat more productive than independent labour, the result would be, that any given territory might support a greater number of persons than before; and not that the objects of our desire might be encreased almost to infinity. The manifest absurdity, that a definite surface may be made to support indefinite numbers, could not be maintained by any person commonly acquainted with the principles of the production of wealth.

But the question of affording comfort and independence to the people, depends not only on the principles according

to which wealth is produced, but also upon the principles according to which wealth is distributed. Mr. Owen seems totally ignorant of the important fact, that as population and capital increase, and render it necessary either to bring in inferior soils, or to bestow heightened cultivation on the old, a greater proportion of the wealth of a country appears in the form of rent. The condition of the labouring classes must every where depend, not upon the quantity of wealth produced, but on the quantity which the existing state of the labour market may turn into the channel of wages. If the labouring classes produce a greater number of children than is requisite to supply the effectual demand for labour, the superfluous numbers must necessarily die off, for want of sufficient subsistence; and, from the very constitution of society, and from the natural order according to which wealth distributes itself, a part of the community will be suffering the extremes of misery, long before the ultimate limits of production are obtained; and even while the more favoured classes are in the enjoyment of superfluity and luxury. Should Mr. Owen contend that this is a vicious state of things, and that in his new view of society it is proposed to correct the inequalities in the distribution of wealth, and to bring the surplus revenue which now appears in the forms of rent and profit, to supply the deficiency of wages, the obvious reply would be, that his new view of society is nothing more than a Spencean project in disguise; and that it is liable to all the objections formerly urged. If his scheme were adopted, the population would increase to the point at which the utmost exertions of each family, when aided by their dividend of rent and profit, would be just sufficient to supply their animal wants: universal poverty would prevail: not an individual would be left to cultivate art, or to investigate science; and in a short time, this boasted project

for ameliorating the condition of mankind, would reconduct us to the savage state.

Should Mr. Owen urge, that his new view of society comprises regulations for keeping the supply of labour within the limits of the demand, it may fairly be required of him, why he exhibits in the foreground, complex and enormously expensive arrangements, which in themselves are perfectly inefficacious, while he throws in shade, the simple and obvious principle, the adoption of which would immediately remove the misery he deplores. If population can be so regulated, that the supply of labour shall not exceed the demand, then poverty, and its train of evils, moral and political, will be effectually eradicated; but if the numbers of the people cannot be so regulated, projects for ameliorating their condition are but the pernicious nostrums of a political empiricism, which aggravates the disease it ignorantly pretends to cure. If Mr. Owen seems to afford general relief by regulating population, his new system, with all its complicated and enormously expensive apparatus, is unnecessary and superfluous; and if he does not intend to induce the adoption of arrangements for proportioning the supply of labour to the demand, then this vaunted system would create a population so redundant, that the whole of the net revenue of the country would be required to supply the merely animal wants of the people; that arts, literature, and science, would be abandoned; and a more than Gothic ignorance prevail.

In vain may Mr. Owen refer us to the example of a society established in the state of Pennsylvania, upon the principle of combined labour. The society formed under the name of Harmony has as yet an abundance of new and fertile land, over which it can extend cultivation at pleasure. In such a state of things, capital and subsistence may be made to increase as fast as man can multiply his kind;

and consequently, poverty may long continue unknown. Widely different is the case in England. When all the good and well-situated lands of a country have already been appropriated and occupied, it is found impossible to increase capital and subsistence as rapidly as the powers of procreation may multiply the people; and there is no possibility of obviating poverty and misery except by regulating population.

Sufficient, it is hoped, has been said to establish the important fact, that in a country where, in consequence of all the good and well-situated lands being already appropriated and occupied, capital and subsistence can no longer be *kept up to the population*, the only possible means of eradicating pauperism, is by *keeping down the population* to a level with capital and subsistence. Now there seem to be only two ways of keeping down population to the level of capital and subsistence: and these are, a prudential or moral restraint for preventing the birth of superfluous numbers; and, a well-regulated system of colonization for removing such numbers, should they be born. The first must necessarily depend upon the extension of knowledge, and the formation of prudential habits amongst the mass of the people. And when we contemplate the probable effects of the Schools of Bell and Lancaster, as well as of our numerous banks for the accumulation of small savings, we may anticipate an almost incalculable improvement in the condition of the labouring classes, and look forward with confidence to the period when a prudential check on population shall apportion the supply of labour to the demand, and thereby banish poverty, with its consequences, discontent, and turbulence, and disaffection, from the land.

But the benefit to be expected from our school and bank societies, though certain, is remote; and these

excellent institutions are calculated to prevent the future recurrence of pauperism; not to remove that which actually exists. While, therefore, we adopt preventive measures with a reference to the future, and employ our utmost efforts to afford the people the means of moral instruction, and to present them with all possible inducement to the acquiring of prudential habits, it is necessary, if we would effect any immediate reduction in the enormous burthen of the poors rate, and at the same time prevent a considerable portion of the superfluous hands which the transition from war to peace has thrown upon the labour market, from perishing of famine, to resort to the second means of regulating the amount of our population, and adopt a more extended system of colonization. Happily, the vast regions of Canada, the Cape of Good Hope, and New Holland, furnish us with an almost unlimited vent for our redundant population; and enable us, without difficulty, and without expence, to provide for every able-bodied pauper in the United Kingdom.

When the knowledge and skill of an old and civilized country are brought to bear upon the unexhausted soil of a new settlement, the productive powers of industry, and consequently, the profits of stock, and the wages of labour, become so extremely high, that, under the guidance of persons moderately acquainted with the nature and sources of wealth, the colonists sent out from the different parishes and workhouses might be furnished with the means, not only of supporting themselves, but of replacing in a short period, the expences of their transport. This will appear abundantly evident to those who have attended to the rapid manner in which new and back settlers in America, not only raise for themselves an independent supply of subsistence, but create a surplus for exchange. In the year 1805, a society of German colonists, amounting to

about ninety families, purchased a tract of ground on Conaquenesing Creek, in the western territory of Pennsylvania, and such, under right direction, were the productive powers of their industry, that in 1809, four years after their first establishment, they not only raised their own subsistence, but sold 4000 bushels of grain, besides other agricultural produce, and some wrought goods. In order, therefore, to provide for our superfluous and starving population, without incurring any permanent charge upon the state, we have only to avail ourselves of the experienced fact, that when the skill and capital of a civilized country are applied to the unexhausted and fertile soil of a new settlement, the produce of labour greatly exceeds what is necessary to support the labourers. Supposing, that in our colonies of Canada, the Cape, and New South Wales, the wages of common labour are three shillings per diem, and that, in consequence of the cheapness of provisions, the labourer can subsist upon one; then, the surplus earnings of each labourer would be two shillings per diem. Now, let it cost £25. to convey a man to Canada; and then, the value of his labour for 250 days will, besides maintaining him while at work, replace the expence of sending him out. Supposing it to cost £50. to convey a man to the Cape, and £75. to convey him to New South Wales; then, the value of his labour and the deduction for his maintenance being as before, the surplus earnings of 500 days will be sufficient to replace the expence of sending him to the former settlement; and those of 750 days to the latter.

It is scarcely necessary to state, that the above data respecting the cost of transport, and the value of labour in the colonies, are assumed, not with a view to precise accuracy, but merely for the purpose of illustrating the principle upon which the expence of removing those who

are likely to become chargeable to the parishes, may be replaced; and our superfluous, and therefore perishing, population provided for, without entailing any permanent burthen on the nation. When the skill of an improved country is applied to the unexhausted and fertile districts of a new settlement, the productive powers of industry are astonishingly high; provisions become cheap, and labour dear; and by consequence, the labourer is enabled to earn considerably more than is necessary for his support. It follows, that every able-bodied person may, on arriving at a new and well-regulated settlement, immediately acquire a disposable surplus revenue, which, previous to going out, he may anticipate, and mortgage for the payment of his passage. All, therefore, that is necessary, in order to reduce the Poors Rates, and to relieve the prevailing distress, is, to offer the persons capable of labour, who are chargeable upon their parishes, grants of colonial land, upon the condition that they shall, on arriving at their destination, give in return such a portion of their labour, or of the wages of their labour, as may be sufficient to replace the expences incurred in sending them out. It is very unlikely that an offer of this kind would be rejected by persons reduced to a degrading and miserable dependence upon parish support. If, however, the number of voluntary emigrants should be insufficient to remove the redundant supply of labour, then the legislature might interfere, and enact, that all who married after a given time, and who subsequently, in consequence of the labour market being overstocked, became incapable of maintaining their families at home, should no longer be entitled to parish aid, but in lieu of it, should receive grants of colonial land, on the conditions above detailed. But the probability is, that the desire to accept these grants would be very general, and that the number of voluntary colonists would exceed,

rather than fall short of what was necessary to equalize the supply of labour with the demand; and that Government might find it expedient not to stimulate, but to check emigration. The amount of the Poors Rates would afford an infallible political barometer for determining whether emigration to the colonies was going on too slowly or too fast. While able-bodied persons remained incapable of earning independent subsistence for their families, we should have clear demonstration that numbers continued in excess; and, on the contrary, when none received parish relief, except persons incapable of labour, there would be a certain indication, that the supply of labour had been reduced within the limits of the demand, and that colonization had, for the present, been pushed sufficiently far.

It is obvious that the conditions and arrangements made respecting emigrant paupers, for the purpose of their replacing to the public the expence of sending them to the Colonies, might be rendered far more liberal and more advantageous to them, than the contracts which have so frequently been entered into, for discharging the debt incurred to private individuals for a passage to the United States. When a merchant, or a master of a vessel, agrees to give a passage to emigrating paupers, and to receive in payment, the disposal of their labour for a certain period, he considers the contract as a transaction of trade, and exacts from the emigrants a period of service, sufficient not only to repay the actual expence of the voyage, but to yield him, besides, an adequate, and too frequently, an enormous profit. All, however, that the public would require from the emigrating poor would be, such a portion of their surplus labour as might be necessary just to replace the expence of sending them out. Now, in a new and well-regulated settlement, where, as all experience proves, industry is unusually productive; and where, in consequence

of the abundance of land, little rent is paid, almost the whole of the wealth annually created takes the form of high profits and high wages: the surplus earnings of the labourer become very considerable; and, therefore, those who obtained colonial grants might easily and speedily fulfil their engagements to the public.

It would be superfluous to enter, in this place, into the detail of the arrangements requisite to enable the emigrating poor to replace in the easiest and most expeditious manner, the expence of conveying them to their destination. These arrangements, indeed, could scarcely be reduced to a general system, applicable to colonies situated in different quarters of the world, and existing in various stages of advancement and civilization; but they would, under the peculiar circumstances of each particular case, naturally suggest themselves to any persons acquainted with the principles of production, to whom the management of new settlements might be committed.

The great advantages which would result from the successful adoption of the plan here proposed, it is almost unnecessary farther to enforce. As the generative power enables a thousand, or a million, to double their numbers as rapidly as a single pair, it follows, that if population increase at all, it must have a tendency to increase in a geometrical ratio; and that it would have been impossible progressively to people a world of limited extent, without implanting a principle whose operation should, at some period or other, cause numbers to augment too rapidly for food. With respect to England, this period has long since arrived. If we were to extend tillage over inferior tracts, or to heighten the cultivation of our fertile lands, each additional quantity of capital applied to the soil, would yield a less proportional return; and while the generative powers (unless reduced by the deterioration of the human constitution) remained

unimpaired, the productive powers which supply subsistence would be perpetually decreasing. It is impossible to repeat too often, or to urge too strongly, that when the fertile and well-situated lands of a country have been already occupied, it is impossible to apportion the supply of labour to the limits of the demand, without a high degree of moral culture, or an extensive system of colonization. Now, the operation of our admirable institutions for imparting to the mass of the people an adequate knowledge of their duties, must necessarily be slow and gradual. For the immediate relief of actual distress there remains no remedy, except an extension of colonization. This would produce an instantaneous and almost magical effect. Transplanting to the colonies those who cannot find employment at home, would be followed at once by a reduction of the Poors Rates, and by a mitigation of the distress which has overspread the country. While the glut of hands was thus removed from the labour market, and while those who remained received, in consequence, a rate of wages adequate to their support, want would cease to engender the desire of change; the ideas of relief and of revolution would lose their fatal connexion in the minds of the multitude; and the spirit of discontent and disaffection, which rarely becomes formidable except when aggravated and perpetuated by the goad of famine, would no longer endanger our establishments. To an old and populous country, in which education and knowledge have not been sufficiently extended to give operation to a prudential and moral check upon the number of births, a well-regulated system of colonization acts as a safety-valve to the political machine, and allows the expanding vapour to escape, before it is heated to explosion.

The general principle, that a populous country, in which the progress of knowledge has not given effect to a

prudential check upon increase, should adopt a liberal system of colonization, applies with peculiar force to the particular circumstances in which the United Kingdom is at present placed. While the transition from war to peace, and the loss of capital occasioned by the consequent change in the channels of industry, have very much diminished the demand for labour, the disbanding of our soldiers and sailors has considerably increased the supply. Under such circumstances, the reduction, nay, the total demolition of our military and naval establishments, could have little effect in lightening the burthens of the country; for the greater part of the men discharged must be supported by their parishes; and in whatever degree the minister's estimates for the year might be thereby reduced, in that degree would the Poors Rates be augmented. But while, in the present state of the labour market, disbanding our soldiers and sailors could effect but a trifling and inconsiderable reduction in the sum to be raised by taxes and poors rates, it would occasion a lamentable deterioration in the condition of those who may have spent the best part of their lives in the service of their country, would immure them in the workhouse, or turn them out, to "beg bitter bread through realms their valour saved." Under these circumstances, humanity and justice, no less than policy, require that we should avail ourselves of the resources placed in our hands by the vast extent of unappropriated colonial territory, and offer our discharged soldiers and sailors, who cannot find employment at home, provision in distant settlements.

There is another circumstance which, though its occurrence may be somewhat remote, ought not to be excluded from the comprehensive views of the statesman. All the best-informed writers upon the state of Ireland, represent the population as being more dense than that of England.

Now, while a very considerable part of the thinner population of England is engaged in manufactures, almost the whole of the more dense population of Ireland is employed upon the soil. Hence it is evident, that to cultivate any given surface, or to raise any given produce, requires in Ireland a much greater number of labourers than in England. But unless Ireland should always remain deficient in skill and capital, this is a state of things which cannot last. If the improved modes of farming adopted in England and Scotland should ever be extended to Ireland, it is probable that one half of the persons now engaged in agriculture in that country, would be found sufficient to raise a more abundant produce than is raised at present. Here then, an important, a momentous question arises. When increasing capital and skill enable the business of agriculture in Ireland to be performed by a smaller number of hands, how are those who must be thrown out of their customary employment, to be provided for? Ireland, purchasing her wrought goods from England, may extensively adopt the improved system of farming, long before her manufactures become sufficiently flourishing to give employment to the hands no longer required upon the soil. In this case, unless some wise and energetic measures of prevention be adopted, Ireland, in advancing to wealth and prosperity, must necessarily pass through a period of extreme distress. Her situation, on adopting an improved system of agriculture, will be in some respects similar to that in which England was placed in the times of the Tudors; when, on the transition from the feudal state, the land proprietors began to expend their revenues on luxuries and refined manufactures, then brought exclusively from abroad, and dismissed the idle and unprofitable retainers who had formerly consumed the produce of their

estates. The poor laws were enacted to remedy this temporary evil; and their effect has been, to perpetuate pauperism in England.

If a sudden transition from a defective to an improved system of farming, should, as we have contemplated, throw a portion of the Irish agricultural population out of employment, the state of our colonies, and the increase of knowledge, will happily enable us to apply a more appropriate remedy, and one which can be followed by no permanent injury and exhaustion.

These speculations respecting the probable consequences of suddenly introducing into Ireland an improved system of agriculture, causing any given quantity of produce to be raised by a smaller number of hands, are submitted to the candid and serious consideration of those who have had more extensive opportunities of observing the internal situation and economy of that country. They have, confessedly, a reference to a period somewhat remote; and those who may admit their validity, may deem that sufficient to the day is the evil thereof; and that in times of such immediate difficulty and pressure it is unnecessary to dive into the future, in order to enforce the necessity of affording settlements in the colonies to those who cannot find employment at home. The existing circumstances of the country, the actual sufferings of the people, are sufficient, independently of any anticipated aggravation, to establish the conclusion which has here been drawn. All our fertile and well-situated lands being already occupied, the power of increasing subsistence is lower than the power of increasing population; and therefore, until our institutions for extending education, and moral and prudential habits, have had time to give effect to a preventive check upon the number of births, there can be neither relief nor safety,

except in emigration. The hive contains more than it can support; and if it be not permitted to swarm, the excess must either perish of famine, or be destroyed by internal contests for food.

A

LETTER

TO

D. RICARDO, ESQ.

CONTAINING

AN ANALYSIS OF HIS PAMPHLET

ON THE

DEPRECIATION OF BANK NOTES.

BY THE

REV. ALEXANDER CROMBIE, LL. D.

London.

1817.

A

LETTER, &c.

SIR,

WHEN I had the pleasure of meeting you at Woolwich, in company with our respected friend Major Torrens, I intimated my intention of analysing your pamphlet, on the depreciation of Bank Notes. My professional, and other engagements, since that time, have so occupied my attention, that till within these few weeks, I have not been able to command sufficient leisure for carrying my design into execution. Having perused your pamphlet, with a mind, I trust, free from prejudice, and open to conviction, I submit the result to your candid examination; assuring you, that I am not ambitious of victory, but anxious to discover truth.

The question between us is, "whether were bank notes, from the passing of the Restriction Act, till lately, in a state of depreciation, or were they not?" You maintain the affirmative; to me, on the contrary, the negative proposition appears the only one consistent with acknowledged principles, and reconcileable with known facts.

Before I proceed to the discussion of this question, as treated in your pamphlet, it may be useful to specify one or two points, concerning which we are agreed.

In the first place, then, we concur in the opinion, that commodities measure the value of money, in the same manner as money measures the value of commodities; and that the only proof which we can possess of the relative worth of currency, in two places, is its greater or less power to purchase commodities.

2dly. I agree with you in thinking, that coin, being easily convertible into bullion, and exportable, may be regarded as a commodity; remarking however, at the same time, that though coin and bullion are mutually convertible, they ought not to be considered as things precisely identical.

In every controversy, it is of supreme importance, correctly to conceive the meaning of the terms which we employ. Where these are misunderstood, the contention may be endless, where the parties are agreed; as on the contrary, opinions may seem to harmonize, where in reality there is nothing but repugnance and discord. As the term depreciation occurs frequently in this controversy, and as our view of the question depends much on the notions which we attach to this term, it is highly necessary that we clearly and fully comprehend its import. At any rate, each should understand, in what acceptation the other employs it. By *depreciation* then, I mean, a diminution of exchangeable value, whether that value be expressed in money, or in commodities. In order to illustrate this, let us suppose, that all commercial intercourse is effected by barter. In this case, any article brought to market, would be correctly said to be in a state of depreciation, when its power of commanding the usual quantity of other commodities, or the usual quantity of labour, was diminished. In a country, where money serves as the medium of exchange, or as the measure of exchangeable value, a commodity is said to be depreciated when it commands a less than the usual quantity of currency, whether that currency consist of the precious metals only, or of these and paper money.

But though money, or the precious metals, be commonly employed, in all commercial countries, as the measure of value, possessing a peculiar aptitude for that purpose, above all other mediums of exchange, it is still to be remembered, that the real criterion, by which the worth of any commodity is to be estimated, is the quantity of labour which it can command. And, as labour is undertaken chiefly for the purpose of procuring the necessaries and comforts of life, the most correct measure of value, next to labour, is the quantity of those necessaries and comforts, for which any commodity may be exchanged. Money may be conveniently employed to express the value of labour, though that labour be itself the only real measure of value: but it is still to be remembered, that the labourer, in estimating his services, looks not at the money which they may command, but at the portion of necessaries, conveniences, and comforts, which that money may be able to purchase. By the depreciation then of any commodity, is meant *a diminution of its exchangeable value*, in relation to labour or to other commodities, those chiefly of primary necessity,

whether the comparative value be estimated directly, or through the medium of any species of currency.

On opening your pamphlet, I find your observations introduced with a theorem, which I consider to be wholly gratuitous. You state it to be the opinion of the most approved writers on political economy, that the precious metals, previously to the establishment of banks, were divided into certain proportions, among civilized nations, according to the state of their commerce; and that while so divided, the precious metals every where retained the same value. I will not stop to inquire, how far you are authorized to ascribe this opinion to the most approved writers on political economy; but I do not hesitate to affirm, that this doctrine, which constitutes the basis of your reasoning, is not only entirely gratuitous, and, on this ground only, not entitled to our assent, but is also contradicted by the testimony of positive and unequivocal facts. On this hypothesis I would beg leave to submit to you the following observations.

1st. It is not necessary, that the precious metals in one country shall bear the same ratio, in respect to quantity, to those in another country, as the quantity of commodities to be circulated in the one, bears to the quantity to be circulated in the other. Nothing is more conceivable, because nothing is more consistent with known facts, than that equal quantities of homogeneous commodities may be circulated in two different countries, by very different quantities of the precious metals. That a certain quantity of coin is necessary for effecting exchanges, in other words, that a *minimum* must be admitted, is clear; but that a larger quantity than is indispensable for this purpose, may exist in every country, is equally evident. If the half of the whole currency of this country, inclusive of paper money, were annihilated in one night, the remainder, as Hume observes, would answer the purposes of exchange: the only difference would be, that money would acquire a double value.

2dly. The distribution of the precious metals, which you suppose, among commercial nations, never did, and I may venture to add, never can exist. Were every other argument wanting to prove this impossibility, a reference to your own conclusion, as its necessary effect, would be sufficient. For, if the necessary effect of this supposed distribution of the precious metals were an equalization of their value in different countries, the want of this equilibrium is a sufficient evidence, that the assumed distribution does not exist. If we compare the value of the precious metals in England, France, and Scotland, not to mention some other countries, in which the disparity is still greater; if we compare the value of the precious metals in these countries, as exchanged either for labour, or articles of primary necessity, we must arrive

at one or other of these two conclusions: 1st, Either the precious metals have not been distributed according to the ratio, which the hypothesis presumes; or, 2dly, If this distribution is affirmed to exist, it has not been accompanied with that equilibrium in their value, which you maintain would be its necessary effect. Either alternative proves the doctrine to be false. The same quantity of the precious metals will command a larger portion of labour, and the necessaries of life, in every other country than they can command in England. What does this prove? That the distribution assumed by you, and its necessary effect, are merely ideal. In no two commercial countries is money found to be of equal value. If a cause then is necessarily accompanied with a certain effect, the absence of that effect clearly demonstrates the absence of the cause.

You may reply perhaps, that the supposed distribution was antecedent to the establishment of banks. I am desirous to know, what evidence you can produce, that such a distribution ever existed. As far as my researches extend, I discover no period in ancient times, when the comparative value of money in different countries could justify your theory: on the contrary, I find clear and decisive facts leading to an opposite conclusion. If I compare the prices of corn, of slaves, of houses, of cattle in Rome, Greece, and Judæa, at the same period, the comparison justifies me in asserting, that money, at that period, was not distributed in these countries in such a ratio, as to equalize its value. Nor do I believe, that this equilibrium ever existed. The value of money in every country must be in the inverse ratio of its whole amount, and directly as the *quantum* of commodities, *cæteris paribus*, which it has to circulate. If therefore I find no period, when in commercial nations, ancient or modern, money was every where of the same value, I am warranted in concluding, that money was never so distributed among them as you have supposed. If the necessary effect is not found, I may logically infer, that the correlative cause does not exist.

I agree with you in thinking, that an increase of the *quantum* of currency, whether that currency consist of coin, or of paper, or of both, has a necessary tendency to diminish its value; but with this limitation of the general proposition, that the *quantum* of commodities to be circulated by that currency be supposed to have experienced no increase. If their number, or their quantity, has been augmented, the circulating medium may be proportionally increased, without any reduction of its value.

I agree with you also in thinking, that, when the currency of a country is reduced in value by an increase of quantity, while exchangeable commodities remain the same, if this increase has been

occasioned by the issue of bank paper, the currency can be restored to its former value in no other way, than by withdrawing the increase in the quantity of paper money, or exporting an equivalent quantity of coin.

You observe, that coin will never be exported, unless its exportation be advantageous to the country. In this proposition, as universally true, I do not concur. Necessity may require the exportation of specie. But, as this subject will be resumed hereafter, I forbear at present to discuss the question.

You observe also, that, if the melting of our coin could be effectually prevented, while the exportation of gold were allowed, two ounces or more of coined gold might possibly be given for one ounce of uncoined gold; "This," you say, "would be a real depreciation of our currency, raising the price of all other commodities in the same proportion, as it increased that of gold bullion."

Here I would offer two observations. In the first place, I do not perceive how our currency would be depreciated by the advanced price of gold bullion. The coin retains its former value in relation to every other commodity for which it is exchanged. If so, unless we are to suppose, that there is no other measure of the value of gold coin, but gold bullion, (and this, according to a proposition already stated, in which we both concur, is not to be supposed) we cannot consistently maintain that gold coin has suffered depreciation. But, say you, gold does not retain its relative value in respect to other commodities; their price is raised in proportion as that of gold bullion is increased. By what process of reasoning is this proved? How do you show, that an increased price of bullion increases the value of every other commodity, bullion in this case being considered as a mere commodity? I can no more conceive how this effect should follow, than that, because a pipe of wine may be sold for two hundred, instead of one hundred guineas, owing to an increased demand, the price of every other commodity should be raised in the same proportion.

But let us take it for granted, that your position is true, and that the price of all commodities rising with that of bullion, gold would suffer a proportionate depreciation, I would in the second place request your particular attention to this doctrine, the truth of which is here clearly and explicitly recognised by yourself, I mean, that the value of currency is measured by commodities, and that a *real depreciation* of gold and silver coin is demonstrated only by an advanced price of all exchangeable commodities. How this admission is to be reconciled with your doctrine, I am at a loss to conjecture; for here you admit, that a diminution of exchangeable value in comparison with that of commodities is the criterion of "a real depreciation" of currency.—You proceed:

"Thus then it appears, that the currency of one country can never for any length of time be much more valuable, as far as equal quantities of the precious metals are concerned, than that of another." This conclusion, if logically deducible from your preceding observations, would infallibly prove, that your premises are false; for at no period has the value of money, as measured either by commodities or by labour, been nearly so high among commercial nations on the continent, as it has been in England. An ounce of silver or of gold will command double the quantity of labour in France, that it will command in this country. And it is this depreciation of specie, which has enabled Britain, as Mr. Hume observes, to subsidize foreign nations, with comparatively so small an assessment on the labour and industry of the English people. One day's wages of a journeyman carpenter, if he were taxed to that amount, would support a foreign mercenary for ten days; whereas it would require two or three days' labour of a French or Russian carpenter to accomplish the same object. Incontrovertible as this fact is, you proceed to reason, as if an ounce of gold were not of more value in France, than it is in England; and argue, that were it of more value, gold would immediately quit England, and go to France for the purchase of commodities, which must be cheaper there than here. You do not surely mean to deny, that an ounce of gold will purchase more labour, more corn, more land, better lodging in France than in England. The fact cannot be disputed. Gold is cheaper in this country, than in France; and sufficient reasons can be assigned why gold does not quit England and go to France. The disparity of value should, I conceive, have shown you the falsity of your theory. Were your doctrine just, not a guinea would have been left in England: Scotland, where labour continues still of lower nominal value than it is in this country, compared with the precious metals, and where thirty years ago, it bore not half of the nominal value which it possessed here, must long ere now have drained England of her last guinea. One or other of these positions then must be affirmed, either that labour is not a measure of value, or that your theory is false.

Your observations respecting the Bank issues, (p. 9. 10. 11.) proceed on the same erroneous assumption of a general equilibrium; and your deduction founded in that error, that an unfavourable exchange is owing to a redundant currency, I consider to be entirely false. In opposition to the clearest evidence, that the same quantity of gold or silver will in different countries be exchanged for different quantities of labour, and is therefore of different values; in opposition, I say, to this incontestable fact, you assume a fanciful hypothesis, that there exists an equilibrium of

value, in respect to the precious metals, among all commercial nations.

You observe, that, "if the Restriction Act had not taken place, and the process of converting guineas into bullion had continued, the Bank would have been compelled to withdraw part of its notes from circulation, till it should have increased the value of the remainder to that of gold bullion, and consequently to the value of the currencies of other countries."

Here let me ask, what is the best criterion of the value of currency here, or any where? Is it not labour? And can you suppose, that the Bank could have so far reduced its issues, as to make a guinea, or a pound note and a shilling, command as much labour, or as much corn in England, as on the continent, without inflicting a deadly blow on the whole community? Besides, permit me to ask, is the same quantity of gold or silver of equal value, as measured by labour, in France, as in Russia? in Poland, as in Holland? in Norway, as in Spain? If it be not of equal value in these different nations, I am desirous to know your meaning, when you say, that the Bank note, if the issues of Bank paper had been diminished, might have been rendered equivalent to bullion, and the currencies of other countries. If these different currencies, as measured by labour, are of different values, weight for weight, how is this equalization to a variety of discordant standards to be effected? Can one quantity be equal to each of two, or more, unequal quantities?

Your doctrine therefore, that the exportation of money is occasioned by a redundant currency, and for the purpose of equalization, I must consider as wholly false. It appears to me indeed to be a proposition superlatively paradoxical to maintain, that our late exportation of gold was occasioned by redundancy, when scarcely a guinea was to be seen in circulation. You may reply perhaps, that your proposition refers to money generally, and not to gold particularly; and you may contend, that the redundancy was created by excessive issues of Bank paper. This answer appears to me unsatisfactory. From the year 1793 to the year 1797, during which period there were no extraordinary issues of Bank notes, whence arose that unusual efflux of gold from England to the Continent? How is this to be explained consistently with your doctrine? Was this efflux owing to a redundancy of gold, or was it not occasioned by the exigencies of state necessity? Was it not confessedly owing to large advances of gold made to government by the Bank?—advances, in which redundancy had no concern? And if large sums were thus exported by government, the issue of an additional quantity of Bank paper became indispensable, in order to supply the deficiency, and by preserving

our currency at its former level, to prevent an injurious fluctuation of its value.

"It being acknowledged," you say, "by Mr. Thornton, that the price of gold bullion is rated in gold coin, and that the law against melting and exporting gold currency is easily evaded, it follows, that no demand for gold bullion can raise the money price of that commodity. The error of this reasoning proceeds from not distinguishing between an increase in the value of gold, and an increase in its money price."

As I proceeded in reading this passage, I naturally conceived, that the deduction, beginning with the words "it follows," was an inference of your own, drawn from the preceding observations of Mr. Thornton; and the structure of the sentence obviously requires this interpretation. But in the sentence immediately following, this conclusion is affirmed to be erroneous. This apparent contrariety created in my mind considerable doubt, to which of the two I should ascribe the deduction. The last sentence however of the paragraph removed the uncertainty; for there you affirm, that "an ounce of gold bullion could not, whatever the demand might be, while its price was rated in gold coin, be of more value than an ounce of coined gold." This observation, when analysed, will, I apprehend, resolve itself either into a contradiction, or a truism. Certain it is, it cannot possibly subserve your hypothesis. It proceeds on the supposition, that the statute law of the country can infallibly and unalterably fix the value of the guinea, as a certain and invariable standard; while it presupposes, at the same time, that the statute is incapable of fixing this value, being very easily evaded, and that the standard itself may vary into bullion. It supposes that to be definite and unchangeable, which it supposes at the same time to be indefinite and variable. You would, in my opinion, have advanced a more consistent and philosophical proposition, if you had affirmed, that the guinea itself is not uniformly or universally a correct measure of value; for being easily convertible into bullion, and no statute being capable of wholly preventing that conversion, when the price of bullion rises considerably above the mint price, it then ceases to be a measure of value.

Besides, if the guinea is really to be considered as a fixed standard, and if the price of bullion cannot rise above the mint price of the guinea, is not this an absurdity equal to maintaining, that the thing measured cannot exceed that, by which it is measured? What sort of a standard is that, which may exceed the thing measured, but cannot fall short of it? The guinea is either convertible into bullion, or it is not. If it is not convertible into bullion, the extreme severity of the law being supposed capable of

preventing it, then bullion as rated in gold coin may rise considerably above it in value. This you yourself have already admitted. I may not be inclined to convert coin into bullion at the hazard of my life, and may prefer giving an ounce and a quarter of gold coin for an ounce of bullion. If it is easily, and without much hazard, convertible into bullion, then the guinea, rising with bullion in value, ceases to be a standard. Hence bullion can no longer be said to be rated in gold coin, the thing measured being as much a value of the measure itself, as the measure is of it. In such circumstances to maintain that gold bullion is rated in gold coin, is to maintain that bullion is rated in bullion—a proposition which no man will controvert, however little information it may convey.

In short, your observation implies the truth of two contrary suppositions, either of which you may take; but without involving a contradiction, or substituting a truism for an argument, you cannot take both. Either say, that the guinea is a perfect and invariable standard, marking the relative values of all commodities, in which case, bullion may rise in value above coin; or say, that the guinea is not an invariable and just standard, because in some cases, instead of determining or measuring the price of bullion, its own value is measured by that of bullion: nor can it be denied, in any consistence with propriety, that if the value of bullion rises, the value of the guinea, which must be regarded as bullion, rises with it.

In vain do you offer the distinction between the value and the money price, to which distinction Mr. Thornton's inattention, you observe, has led him into error. If gold coin be easily convertible into bullion, the money price and the value are identical, when bullion rises above the mint price. The guinea then ceases to be a mere coin, a measure of value; and becomes itself an exchangeable commodity, subject to all the fluctuations of bullion, into which it is, or may be, converted. If bullion be rated in coin, bullion must be different from coin. If an ounce of bullion were uniformly worth an ounce of coin, bullion could not be said to be rated in coin as a measure of value.

In short, your view of the question places you in a dilemma, from which there is no escape. Either gold coin is a standard of value, not liable to be melted or exported, and measuring the excess or the inferiority of the value of bullion above or below itself; or gold coin is not such a standard of value, but a mere commodity. If the former alternative be assumed, then it follows, that bullion, like any other commodity, may rise, and continue for a considerable time above the value of the coin. If the latter alternative be adopted, then gold coin, as being easily melted and exported, becomes a mere commodity, is no longer a measure of value, and ceases to be a standard.

Suspecting, it would seem, the validity of your reasoning, you continue, "If this argument should not be considered as conclusive, I should urge, that a void in the currency, as supposed by Mr. Thornton, can only be occasioned by the annihilation or limitation of paper currency." This observation surprises me. Do you not believe, that a void in the currency may be occasioned by the hoarding of gold and silver? Do you not suppose, that a void may be occasioned by the exportation of specie for the support of our armies on the continent, or for the purchase of corn in a year of scarcity? You say, that money can never be exported to excess. This seems to be one of those indefinite propositions, which it is as easy to assert, as it is hard clearly to comprehend, and therefore difficult to refute. But let us come to an explanation of terms, that we may ascertain its precise purport. What do you mean by *excess?* Do you intend to signify, as your observation, respecting a void would seem to imply, that money cannot be exported so, as to create a void in our currency? If this be what you intend to express, the proposition is still indefinite and vague. A void is either great or small, perceptible or imperceptible. Not a shilling can be hoarded, or exported, but it leaves a void, though that void may not be perceived. Can one or two millions of specie be exported without leaving a void? Let the extent of that vacuum or deficiency be explained, which you term a void, and we shall be able more clearly to comprehend, what you mean by excess.

You deliver it as your opinion, that we should not import more goods, than we export, unless we had a redundancy of currency. How does this appear? Or how do you ascertain a redundancy of currency? If you infer it from the simple fact, that gold is cheaper in this country than elsewhere, and being therefore redundant is exported; or that money generally is cheaper, I answer that, were this observation or conclusion just, the exportation of money from this country must have gone on progressively, till our currency was reduced to a level with the currency on the continent. Has this exportation taken place? or can it probably ever take place? Currency is not redundant in England, because cheaper than in Scotland; nor redundant in Scotland, because cheaper than in France; nor redundant in France, because cheaper than in Russia; nor redundant in Russia, because cheaper than in Norway. The comparative cheapness of gold and silver is no evidence of redundancy; otherwise, they would be redundant every where, that country excepted, in which they are dearest.

Besides, you admit that a nation, having only its due proportion of currency, may waste part of its wealth, lose part of its trade, and not be able to retain its usual quantity of currency. Now, Sir, when this waste of wealth, this diminution of trade takes place, is it a redundancy of currency that makes them export? You

will not maintain this, because it implies a contradiction; nay it is contrary to your own theory, respecting the equilibrium. Is not then the exportation of the precious metals frequently occasioned by necessity, in order to discharge unfavourable balances? When a nation is threatened with famine, and when corn must be procured at any price, is it choice, is it redundancy then, and not necessity, that impels them to export their coin?

It is true, that if the foreign corn-merchant could import goods in return for his corn, which would yield him a greater profit than the payment in specie or the precious metals, he would unquestionably prefer commodities; but when these are prohibited, and when there is no indirect mode of discharging the debt, the English corn-merchant has no alternative: he must purchase his grain with gold. All your observations here presuppose, that commerce is perfectly free, that there can exist no physical, no political necessity, to interrupt this freedom of intercourse, and that choice, not compulsion, in all cases governs our commercial transactions. —This, however, is far from being uniformly the state of things.

You proceed to show, that by an Act passed in the 39th year of the present reign, prohibiting the coining of silver, it would appear, that government intended to establish gold as the standard of currency. This by no means follows; but be it granted. Till government can effectually prevent the melting and exportation of gold coin, and as long as the statute is easily evaded, it is extreme folly to talk of a standard, which shall in extraordinary cases be a measure of value. The standard itself will be measured by that, which it is intended to measure.

You proceed to remark, that, "If an English merchant owes a debt in Holland, of 1100 florins, and gold has not varied in value, he will give 100l. in pure gold to a bullion merchant, allowing him freight, insurance, and profit besides, and he will in return give him a bill equal to 1100 florins; but if he pays the bullion merchant in depreciated paper money, he will expect a premium for his bill, equal to the depreciation of the paper." This I admit to be true: but, if the observation is offered for the purpose of showing, that the Bank Note, because not exchangeable for its usual quantity of gold, was depreciated, I am at liberty to deny the depreciation, till you have demonstrated its existence. Your premises suppose the paper to be depreciated; but we require proof, and not hypothesis. We do not admit, that because gold rose in value, obeying the general law of demand and supply, the bank note fell; and for this reason, that it retained its relative value in respect to other commodities, allowance being made for that general depreciation of all our currency, which has been gradually going on from the earliest periods of our history—And let me remind you of your own acknowledged criterion of what you term "real depreciation," name-

ly, a diminution of exchangeable value in respect to commodities. If then this diminution in the value of the bank note did not take place, there could be no depreciation, consistently with your own theory.

"The Restriction Bill," you observe, "enabled the conductors of the Bank to increase and diminish at pleasure the quantity and amount of their notes, and removed the previously existing checks against an over issue." It does not appear, however, by any satisfactory evidence, that an excessive issue of bank paper did in fact take place. It is contended, I am aware, that the depreciation of bank paper is a sufficient evidence of the fact. This argument cannot be admitted. To reason in a circle, is to reason inconclusively—and to beg the question, is not to argue. You assume the depreciation, and infer the excessive issue; then again you assume the excessive issue, and infer the depreciation. Now this depreciation is denied, for the reasons, which have been already stated. But I will add one simple fact, in corroboration of these reasons. If depreciation had taken place, and if this depreciation was occasioned by excessive issue, the depreciation would have increased, as the issue was augmented—But the very reverse was the effect. In October of the year 1781, the exchange with Hamburgh was at 32; the number of bank notes in circulation amounted to 5,967,970*l.* In March of the year 1782, the exchange had risen to 32-10, though the value of notes in circulation had increased to 9,160,000*l.* If there were no other argument, than this fact, it would alone serve to prove, that, if any depreciation had taken place, it could not be occasioned by an excessive issue of bank notes. At the close of the American war, while bank paper was convertible into gold and silver, the price of gold bullion rose 6 per cent., and that of silver no less than 18.[1] In the year 1795 the Bank purchased gold at no less than 13 per cent. above the mint price, as appears by the evidence of Mr. Newland. It will not be said, that this was occasioned by an over issue of bank notes, in consequence of the "salutary checks" against excessive issue being withdrawn; for the Bank was paying in specie. Was the bank note then depreciated? If bank paper did not then suffer depreciation, when gold was 13 per cent. above the mint price, by what argument is the depreciation proved, when it rises still higher by 6 per cent? Let those who maintain the depreciation of bank paper, clearly define the limit between depreciation and non-depreciation. If there *be no depreciation* when gold bullion is sold at 13 per cent. above the mint price, and if there *be depreciation* when it is sold at 20 per cent. above that price, it is

[1] This extraordinary advance in the value of silver is stated by Mr. Vansittart, in his speech on the Report of the Bullion Committee. At this period, it would appear that no purchases of silver were made by the Bank.

incumbent on them to define the limit, where non-depreciation terminates, and depreciation begins.

In short, let an excessive issue be proved, and depreciation will be admitted, as its necessary effect; or prove depreciation, and we will infer with you an excessive issue: but we cannot admit a circular argument.

You may perhaps consider, that an additional number of bank notes to the amount of £.16,000,000 furnishes a sufficient evidence of an excessive issue. In this opinion I do not concur. Let it be granted, that the additional issues of notes by the national and the provincial banks, amounted, as has been supposed, to twenty-five or thirty millions; was this sum more than sufficient to supply the void occasioned by the hoarding and the exportation of gold, and to preserve our currency at its usual level? Nay, did not our increased commerce, our increased population, and augmented taxes, require an increased currency? Is there any evidence whatever, that the additional issues of bank paper were more than adequate to these purposes? Should it be answered, that the advanced price of commodities was a proof of depreciation, and that this depreciation demonstrates an excessive issue; it may be replied, 1st. that this depreciation affected our whole currency, and had begun rapidly to show itself in the year 1795, two years at least before the Restriction Act took place: 2dly. that additional taxation requires an increase of currency, and that an increased currency, exchangeable commodities remaining the same, is followed by depreciation. This depreciation, therefore, was not a depreciation of bank paper only, but of our whole currency, a depreciation not occasioned by an excessive issue of bank notes, which would affect their value only, but by taxation necessarily requiring a larger quantity of circulating medium. In evidence of this, I need only refer to the depreciation which took place during the American war, even while the Bank paid in specie.

Now let us suppose, as has been conjectured to be near the fact, that the currency in gold, at the commencement of the late war, was 35 millions. It is not an extravagant statement to assume, that 25 millions of this sum disappeared by hoarding and exportation. If it be true, that the nominal price of commodities is in the direct ratio of the quantity of currency, and that the value of currency is reciprocally as its quantity, it is evident, that the necessary effect of withdrawing this sum from the circulation, would be to raise the value of the remainder, and to lower the nominal price of labour, and of every article of consumption. How is this injurious effect to be prevented! In no other way, than by supplying the void occasioned by the abstraction of gold. If the Bank of England then, with the provincial banks, had issued additional notes to the amount of 25 millions, in order to fill up the void, so far from doing an

injury to the community, they would have rendered it an essential service by preserving the currency at its customary level. Nor has any evidence whatever been adduced, that the additional issues of the national and provincial banks exceeded the sum requisite for this purpose, especially when it is considered, that war and taxation necessarily require an increased circulating medium.

You deny (p. 14.) that a void in the circulation can ever take place, and maintain that the increasing scarcity of gold would prevent it. I should wish you to explain, how this scarcity is occasioned, but by the abstraction of gold; in other words, by the production of a void. The scarcity which you admit, implies the existence of a void; for where there is the usual demand, and the usual supply, there can be no scarcity; but where part of the usual supply is withdrawn, thus creating a scarcity, to deny that a void is left by this abstraction, is to deny the scarcity, which your argument presupposes. But let us appeal to fact. You surely will not affirm, that gold was as abundant in the year 1813, as in the year 1792. Is it not a fact, not to be disputed, that towards the close of the war, scarcely a guinea was to be seen? If the abstraction then of almost the whole of our gold currency would not have the effect of creating a void, I must confess that I am totally ignorant what the term *void* can be said o imply. I see no proof therefore, I see nothing but assertion, that the issues of Bank paper were excessive or injurious.

You observe, (p. 29.) "that the exchange will be a tolerably accurate criterion by which we may judge of the debasement of our currency, proceeding either from a clipped coinage, or a depreciated paper money." Will you have the goodness to reconcile this position with the following facts, and then show me, how that can be a criterion of elevation or depression, which, at one and the same period, in respect to one and the same thing, gives two opposite results. In the latter end of the year 1809, the exchange with Hamburgh and Amsterdam was 18 per cent. against us. Here, say you, was an evidence of depreciation of English currency. At the same time the exchange with Sweden was in our favour about 24 per cent. and with Spanish America about 20 per cent. Here, by parity of reasoning, was an evidence of the advanced value of our currency. What then can we think of the accuracy of that criterion, which at one and the same period, represents our currency to be depreciated, and not depreciated—to be falling in value, and yet rising in value? Were I inclined to be surprised at any paradoxical hypothesis, this above all others would excite my astonishment.

Permit me also to request an answer to the following question, your position being presumed, that the exchange furnishes a pretty accurate criterion of the value of our currency. When the

exchange with Amsterdam was 7 per cent. below par, and the exchange with Paris 14 per cent. below par, in what ratio was English currency depreciated. Was it 7 per cent.? or was it 14 per cent.? or how do you estimate the general *quantum* of depreciation? To this question I should wish to be favoured with a clear and satisfactory answer.

You refer to an observation of Dr. A. Smith, in which he considers, that the market price of gold bullion could not greatly exceed the mint price, while the coin was of standard weight and purity. Mr. Locke had made a similar observation, respecting the comparative price of silver bullion, and silver coin. But both observations, though strictly true as general positions, are not universally so. Mr. Thornton has observed, that fluctuations have lately been experienced in our exchanges, and correspondent variations in the market, compared with the mint price of gold, amounting to no less than 8 or 10 per cent., the state of our coinage continuing in all respects the same. You reply, that Mr. Thornton should have reflected, that, at the time he wrote, specie could not be demanded at the Bank in exchange for notes. It is true. But you may be furnished with cases, in which a much greater rise in the price of gold bullion was experienced, than Dr. A. Smith contemplated as possible, even while the Bank was paying its notes in specie. From the year 1702 to 1709 the price of gold bullion exceeded four pounds per oz., while the mint price was only 3*l.* 14*s.* 2*d.*[1] From 1780 to 1784, did not the exchange with Hamburgh rise from 5 to 8 per cent. against England, and the price of foreign gold 6, and of silver 18 per cent. above the mint price, during which three periods the Bank was paying its notes in cash? Dr. Smith's observation, therefore, I do not consider to be universally true.

You observe, that, if one fifth were taken off from every guinea, the market price of bullion would rise one fifth above the mint price. Here, I conceive, you have inadvertently committed a small inaccuracy, the rise above the mint price being one fourth, and not one fifth. The guinea being supposed still to be equivalent to 21 shillings, though only $\frac{4}{5}$ of its former weight, $\frac{1}{4}$ of this added to it makes $\frac{5}{5}$ or the integral weight, equal in value to 26*s.* 3*d.*, not 25 shillings as you compute it. Accuracy requires, that we should either say that the guinea has lost one fifth of its former intrinsic value, or that the price of bullion is one fourth higher than the value of the guinea, the latter being that, from which the computation is drawn. If a man buys goods at 100*l.* and sells them at 125*l.*, we do not say that he gains $\frac{1}{5}$ but $\frac{1}{4}$, the selling price being

[1] See Mr. Vansittart's speech.

$\frac{1}{4}$ above the purchase money. This remark may appear immaterial and captious; but in all discussions of this nature, the strictest accuracy of expression is requisite, because it serves to prevent misconception and error.

You proceed. "Forty-four guineas and a half (the number of guineas weighing a pound, and therefore called the mint price,) would no longer weigh a pound, therefore a fifth more than that quantity, or about 56*l.* would be the price of a pound of gold; and the difference between the market and the mint price, between 56*l.* and 46*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* would measure the depreciation." "If such debased coin," you say, "were to continue to be called by the name of guineas, and if the value of gold bullion and all other commodities were rated in the debased coin, a guinea fresh from the mint would be said to be worth 1*l.* 5*s.*, and that sum would be given for it by the illicit trader; but it would not be the value of the new guinea which had increased, but that of the debased guineas which had fallen. This would immediately be evident, if a proclamation were issued, prohibiting the debased guineas from being current, but by weight at the mint price of 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.*; this would be constituting the new and heavy guineas the standard measure of value, in lieu of the clipped and debased guineas. The latter," you say, "would then pass at their true value, and be called 17 or 18 shilling pieces. So," you observe, "if a proclamation to the same effect were now enforced, Bank notes would not be less current, but would pass only for the value of the gold bullion which they would purchase. A guinea would no longer be said to be worth 1*l.* 5*s.*, but a pound note would be current only for 16 or 17 shillings." You conclude with remarking, that "at present gold coin is only a commodity, and Bank notes are the standard measure of value; but in that case, gold coin would be that measure, and Bank notes would be the marketable commodity."

Permit me to examine this passage. You suppose that a guinea by clipping loses $\frac{1}{5}$ of its weight, and that forty-four guineas and and a half weigh only $\frac{4}{5}$ of a pound. It is supposed also, that every commodity is rated in the debased coin, and that the debased guinea is still exchangeable for a pound note and a shilling. In this case forty-four guineas and a half of this debased currency, would command forty-six pounds of Bank paper with 14*s.* and 6*d.*, but a pound of gold bullion would be worth one fourth more, and not one fifth, as you state, namely, 58*l.* 8*s.* 1½*d.* and not 56*l.* according to your computation.[1] But let us dismiss this inadvertency and proceed.

[1] $\frac{4}{5}$, : 46*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* :: $\frac{5}{5}$, : 58*l.* 8. 1½*d.*

You say, that during the circulation of this debased currency, a guinea fresh from the mint would be said to be worth 1*l.* 5*s.* and that this sum would be given for it by the illicit trader; but it would not be the value of the new guinea which had increased, but that of the debased guinea which had fallen. Here again you appear to me to have formed an erroneous conception of the question. By your own supposition, forty-four guineas and a half of the debased currency are worth forty-six pounds 14*s.* 6*d.* and while they are exchangeable for the same sum in silver and Bank paper, and command therefore the same quantity as usual of commodities and labour, they cannot be said to be depreciated; for depreciation, if it mean any thing, must mean diminution of exchangeable value. They will not purchase the same quantity of bullion as before their deterioration; but in respect to every other commodity, they continue of the same relative value. But, if we take the contrary supposition, if we even suppose that the debased guinea, by losing $\frac{1}{5}$ of its weight, loses also $\frac{1}{5}$ of its exchangeable power, will it be asserted, that it has suffered depreciation? I conceive, that such an opinion would betray great inaccuracy of thought. We know, that in many parts of England and Scotland, certain commodities are sold at a certain rate *per lb.*, that pound consisting in some places of 28 ounces. Now let us suppose, that in one of these places a pound of any commodity is sold at 28 pence, and that this has been the usual price for a series of years. Let us next suppose, that a law is enacted, equalizing weights and measures, and that the pound weight is every where reduced to 16 ounces; would it follow that, because a pound weight of the same commodity is now sold for 16*d.* that it could with any propriety be said to have suffered depreciation? Certainly not. The same real, though not the same nominal weight, still commands the same sum in money as formerly, and the same quantity in barter of every other commodity. I cannot perceive then with what propriety, if a guinea reduced to $\frac{4}{5}$ of its weight still commands $\frac{4}{5}$ of exchangeable commodities, it can be said to have suffered depreciation. If it commands the same quantity of exchangeable commodities, and also of silver and Bank paper as before, instead of being depreciated, I should maintain, that its value has been artificially raised, as far as all domestic transactions are concerned.

You say, "it would be evident, that the value of the new guinea had not increased, but that of the debased had fallen, because, if a proclamation were issued prohibiting debased guineas from being current but by weight, the heavy guineas would become the standard, and the light ones would pass for 17 or 18 shillings."

Here, again, I conceive that your view of the question is chargeable with inconsistency. By your hypothesis, the light guinea continues to be equal to 1*l.* 1*s.*; for your calculation proceeds on this supposition. In what sense then can its value be said to have

fallen? A diminution of weight has taken place; but this diminution, by your own hypothesis, is not followed by a diminution of exchangeable value. In short, the light guinea has acquired an artificial value, while bullion, if bullion in such circumstances could exist, continued to remain, in all domestic transactions, at its usual worth. The effect would be precisely the same, as if the Mint price were raised above bullion in the ratio supposed, in which case, bullion would immediately be converted into coin, just as copper was for many years to a very great extent, converted into halfpence and farthings. Were the halfpence depreciated? The reverse was the fact. They obtained a value, far above their intrinsic worth.

You say, that the evidence of depreciation, is, that, after the proclamation, which you suppose, the light guinea would be sold for 17 or 18 shillings. But be it granted, that after the new guinea is issued, the light one is reduced from 21 shillings to 18, how does this fact demonstrate previous depreciation? The very hypothesis, which you state, controverts your doctrine; for you suppose the light guinea, previously to the issue of the new coin, to have been worth one pound and one shilling, and therefore not to have suffered any depreciation. Had you supposed, that the light guinea had, in consequence of its weight being diminished, been reduced to 17 shillings previously to the issue of the new coin, then depreciation might, in one sense, be said to have taken place; though even here, when the same weight in gold coin was exchangeable for the same quantity of silver, bank paper, and commodities, as before, the guinea could hardly be said to be depreciated. But according to your hypothesis, there cannot, I conceive, be the shadow of a reason for affirming the depreciation of the light guinea, when its exchangeable value for silver, bank paper, and commodities, had suffered no diminution.

Nor is your argument consistent; for it presupposes the equivalence of the light guinea to 21 shillings, while it attempts to prove, that it is equivalent to only 17 shillings. It presumes non-depreciation, as a matter of fact, yet endeavours to overturn this fact.

Again, either the new guinea is issued at 21 shillings, or it is not. If the former alternative be assumed, I am desirous to understand, what should induce the illicit trader to give 25 shillings for the new guinea, when it is issued at twenty-one shillings. On what rational ground is this position maintained? If the new guinea is issued at 25 shillings, then it follows, that the light guinea, as being still equivalent to 1*l.* 1*s.*, has suffered no diminution. But at whatever value the new guinea may be issued, it cannot alter an antecedent fact; it cannot affect the previous value of the old light guinea, which you have supposed to be one pound and one shilling. In the recoinage, of the 1773—7, pre-

viously to which the country had been inundated with light coin, bankers gave, in exchange for their notes, guineas and shillings of the new issue, and therefore of full weight, while the old light coin passed for nothing more than its intrinsic worth. But what does this prove? Not surely, that the old coin *had been* depreciated; but that it had acquired an increased artificial value, which it lost immediately on the issue of the new coin. The same observation is applicable to the late recoinage of silver.

I proceed to your conclusion. "So if a proclamation to the same effect were now enforced, bank notes would not be less current, but would pass only for the value of the gold bullion, which they would purchase. A guinea would then no longer be said to be worth 25 shillings, but a pound note would be current only for 16 or 17 shillings."

It is doubtless true, that, if a proclamation were issued, that bank notes should not pass, but for the value of the gold bullion, which they would purchase, they would circulate at this value, and no more; for an Act of Parliament, whether founded in justice and political expediency, or repugnant to both, will command our obedience. This arbitrary procedure, however, would determine nothing respecting the previous value of the bank note. It would not prove, that it had been depreciated; it could only prove, that while the bank note had retained its usual value, in respect to commodities, it had not risen with the value of gold bullion, which by the proclamation was to be considered as the standard of value—a standard, which neither this, nor any other, country has yet recognised.

But in order to clear the comparison here instituted, of the obscurity and entanglement in which it appears to be involved, we must revert, for a little, to the original subject. Your hypothesis supposes, that the light guinea was equivalent to 21 shillings antecedently to the proclamation, and was exchangeable for its usual value in commodities. Here then there was no depreciation. To render the cases parallel, and your comparison pertinent, it must be supposed, that the one pound note, previously to the proclamation, was exchangeable for 20 shillings, and retained its relative value in respect to labour, and the great mass of commodities. Here also there was no depreciation. But no sooner is the proclamation issued, than the depreciation of both commences. But how is this consistent with your doctrine, that the bank note was depreciated, when no proclamation had been issued, reducing its value.—If the depreciation arose from the proclamation, it is evident, that, if there had been no proclamation, its artificial value might have continued to exist. I wish you therefore to explain, how the bank note was depreciated, while by your own hypothesis

it was equivalent to 20 shillings, retaining its usual exchangeable power, and while no proclamation, reducing its value, had been issued. But the whole argument proceeds on a *petitio principii*, and is chargeable with inconsistency. It presumes gold bullion to be the only measure of value, which you yourself consider as a mere commodity, and therefore no more a measure of value, than any other commodity; and while one part of your argument requires, that gold coin be considered, as a distinct thing from gold bullion, the one being rated in the other, another part of your argument requires, that they be considered as one and the same. While you reprehend others for not considering gold and bullion as mere commodities,—while you expose their inconsistency in confessing them to be commodities, yet reasoning, as if they were not such, you yourself appear to me chargeable with the same error. Coin you sometimes consider as distinct from bullion, and as the measure of value; and coin is, at other times, nothing but a commodity, and therefore not peculiarly a measure of value.

I observe further. When you institute a comparison between two subjects, in order to prove, that being of a similar or identical nature, if they are subjected to the operation of the same causes, the same results will follow, is it not incumbent on you, in the first place to show, that the two subjects are such, as your argument presumes them to be? You compare the bank note to the light guinea.—The latter you suppose to have been clipped, and its value diminished, though it be not easy to see this diminution of value, while it is exchangeable for its usual quantity of labour and commodities. The bank note you presume to have been in the same predicament, and that a royal proclamation would reduce them both to their proper worth. Let me ask, in passing, what was their worth previously to the proclamation? Were they depreciated before? If so, your proclamation is unnecessary. If they were not depreciated, where is your argument? But this by the bye. I return to the point. Have you proved, that the bank note was in the predicament of the light guinea, clipped, shorn, debased, or anywise deprived of any part of its exchangeable value? Have you demonstrated such an analogy or resemblance between them, as will justify your conclusion? Have you proved *any* resemblance? I conceive you have not; you have merely presumed it.

It is in vain to urge, that the bank note was not exchangeable for its usual quantity of gold. This proves nothing, but that gold had risen considerably in value,—a fact by no means unprecedented. During the seven years' war, the price of gold rose above its usual rate, not here only, but also on the Continent. This is attested by Sir James Steuart. (Sec. 2, 3. p. 116. *et al.*) In the year 1759

particularly, gold became so scarce, and its price so high, that the Bank of England issued, for the first time, 10*l.* and 15*l.* bank notes.[1] Nay, it would appear, that not long before the Bullion Committee made their report, the price of gold at Hamburgh and Paris, rose considerably above *par*, and at Amsterdam, not less than 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.[2] Was this advance occasioned by a depreciated paper currency? This will not be affirmed; for at Hamburgh and Amsterdam, they have no paper currency like ours.[3]

I consider it then as an incontrovertible fact, that the value of gold, like that of any other commodity, may not only rise, but, in certain circumstances, may rise considerably above that of bank paper. You acknowledge that gold coin is a commodity. You acknowledge also, that the price of all commodities obeys the general law of demand and supply. Hence the value of gold coin as convertible into bullion, is liable to all those fluctuations, which other exchangeable commodities experience.

I object, therefore, to the whole of this argument, on these grounds: 1st. It is evidently inconsistent. You suppose the light guinea to be depreciated, while at the same time you suppose it to retain its usual relative value. I conceive, on the contrary, that no article can be correctly said to have suffered depreciation, while it is exchangeable for the same quantity of labour and commodities, as usual. *A fortiori* it cannot be said to be depreciated, while a less portion of it has acquired a higher power. To apply the term depreciation to it, on such a supposition, appears to me to be a perversion of language. How much soever the light guinea may have been clipped or debased, while it commands its usual quantity of commodities, it cannot be said to be depreciated: on the contrary, it has acquired an artificial value.

2dly. The argument begs the question. It presumes the bank note to resemble the light guinea, asserting the similarity, without attempting to prove it; beginning with depreciation, as a premise, which it was the object of the argument to prove, as a conclusion.

You observe, (p. 39.) that "we err, when we say, that gold is at a high price: it is not gold, it is paper, which has changed its value." It appears to me extremely difficult to ascertain, what is your fixed and decided opinion on this subject. At p. 19. you say, "When there is a great demand for gold, its corn price will rise." Here we have an acknowledgment, that gold, by reason of the increased demand, may change its value, as measured by corn: and if this be admitted, it follows as a necessary consequence, that if the greater demand augment its corn price, it will augment also

[1] Anderson's History of Commerce, Vol. iii.
[2] Rutherford's Hints from Holland.
[3] See Mr. Vansittart's Speech,

its general exchangeable value. An ounce of gold, as you observe, and as no person will deny, will not be worth more than an ounce of gold, just as a bushel of corn cannot be worth more than a bushel of corn. This proposition, confined to one and the same time, is a perfect truism. But if referred to different times, the proposition is not true; for both corn and gold, severally, in equal quantities, may, at different times, be severally of different values. If then a greater demand for gold will augment its commodity price, you must either deny, that an increased demand existed, in opposition to notorious facts; or if it did exist, you must admit, that the price of gold, as measured by commodities, did rise. The fact, implied in the former alternative, is too well known to be disputed: the admission stated in the latter follows, as a necessary consequence. But, if it be true, that the commodity price of gold did rise, how is this reconcileable with your position, that it was not gold that changed its value. Here, I conceive, is a manifest inconsistency.

Again, you observe, (p. 23.) that "gold has lately experienced a rise, compared with silver." Can gold rise above silver in value, and yet not change its value in relation to silver? To affirm this would be to affirm a contradiction. And is not silver a standard, or measure of value, as well as gold? And was not a one pound note of equal value with twenty shillings, though the note without one shilling more might not be equivalent to a guinea, considered as bullion, or a mere commodity? Your position, therefore, that gold did not change its value, appears to me utterly irreconcileable with your own admissions. But let us next examine your proof, though after the contradiction now evinced, this perhaps may be deemed unnecessary. You say, "Compare an ounce of gold, or 3*l.* 17*s.* 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* to commodities, it bears the same proportion to them which it has before done, and if it do not, it is referable to increased taxation, or to some of those causes, which are so constantly operating on its value. But if we compare the substitute of an ounce of gold 3*l.* 17*s.* 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* in bank notes with commodities, we shall then discover the depreciation of the bank notes. In every market of the world, I am obliged to part with 4*l.* 10*s.* in bank notes to purchase the same quantity of commodities, which I can obtain for the gold, that is in 3*l.* 17*s.* 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* of coin." This affirmation I conceive to be hasty and unfounded. With India and with Sweden, for a considerable time, and also with Jamaica, the exchange was in our favour. But let the affirmative be granted to be true in its full extent. To what does the argument amount? Is it not a repetition of the same fallacy, which has been already sufficiently exposed? For we have first an ounce of gold coin equal to 3*l.* 17*s.* 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* compared with commodities; and then we have an ounce of

bullion equal to 4*l.* 10*s.* as compared with commodities; and because the bullion price has risen above the mint price, *ergo*, the bank note was depreciated. The argument is, for your purpose, inconclusive. It proves simply, that, while the bank note continued to be the same representative of gold coin, the price of bullion had risen above both in the ratio of 4*l.* 10*s.* to 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* The argument, indeed, may be retorted. "Compare 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* in bank paper with commodities, it bears the same proportion to them, as before, and if it do not, it is referable to increased taxation, or to some of those causes, which are so constantly operating on its value;" compare the equivalent of bank paper in gold coin 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* as convertible into bullion, and it will purchase a larger quantity of commodities. Hence, it is not the value of bank paper, which has fallen, but that of bullion, which has risen.

I agree with you in thinking, that, while the Bank pays in gold, it is quite impossible that bullion can rise 15 or 20 per cent. above coin, because the latter would be converted into the former, even to the last guinea in the Bank, before this event could take place. But, when the Bank is restricted from paying its notes in gold, I perceive no assignable limit to the advance of bullion. A perpetually increasing demand, with a constantly decreasing supply, may raise the value of bullion, and of coin, as convertible into bullion, to almost any height.

When the price of bullion rises above the mint price, the bank note, notwithstanding, still continues to be a representative of its usual value in coin, considered as a standard or measure of value; though it ceases to be an equivalent for the same weight in bullion, as is contained in the coin. This, however, furnishes no evidence whatever of its depreciation. 1st. Because its exchangeable value in respect to commodities, remains undiminished. And 2dly. Because a bank note never was intended to represent the value of gold as a commodity, but of coin according to the mint price.

You infer from the difference of value in gold, amounting to 15 per cent, between the years 1797 and 1815, that bank paper was depreciated, and that this depreciation was owing to an excessive issue. But, though a greater issue is acknowledged, an excessive issue is not proved; and if an excessive issue has not been proved, depreciation, its imputed consequence, has not been proved.

You ask, if it would be a matter of indifference to a tailor, whether he received the payment for a coat, valued at 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* in bank notes, or in an ounce of gold, selling for 4*l.* 18*s.* I answer, it would not be a matter of indifference; he would prefer the gold; but does this preference show the depreciation of bank

paper? It does not; it proves merely, that the price of gold has risen; for bank paper still retains its relative value, as exchangeable for labour and every commodity, gold excepted.

You observe, that an unfavourable exchange is limited to 4 or 5 per cent., and that this will not account for a depreciation of 15 or 20 per cent.—If you state as a general proposition, that an unfavourable exchange is limited to 4 or 5 per cent., I agree with you; but if you intend to offer this as a proposition universally true, I must express my dissent.

In the ordinary state of commerce, and while bank notes are easily convertible into gold, your proposition is just. But, when British commodities are excluded from the Continent, while gold is not to be procured from the Bank, and while our debts to the Continent must be discharged in gold, the price of bullion, by reason of the increased demand, and scanty supply, may rise much more above the Mint price, than the mere expense of freight, insurance, and profit, amounting generally to 4 or 5 per cent. This per-centage will satisfy the bill merchant, as long as bank paper is exchangeable at the Bank for gold. But when the Bank is restricted from paying its notes in gold, when English commodities are prohibited abroad, and when an increased demand has raised the price of bullion in the home market, 10 per cent., the bill merchant certainly will not furnish you with bullion or a bill, at five. But, if you infer from this, that the bank note is depreciated, I must again charge you with begging the question, while I repeat my former assertion, that your proposition, respecting the limit of an unfavourable exchange, though generally, is by no means universally true. When exportation is prohibited, and importation allowed, cash payments in the mean time having ceased at the Bank, the proposition is false.

"An ounce of gold is coined into 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* By possessing that sum," you say, "that you have an ounce of gold, and would not give 4*l.* 10*s.* in gold coin, or in notes which you could exchange for 4*l.* 10*s.* for an ounce of gold." True; but what does this show, but that the market price of bullion has risen above the Mint price? you would therefore convert your coin into bullion. "It is contrary," you say, "to common sense to suppose, that such would be the market value, unless the price were estimated in adepreciated medium."

I am desirous to have it explained to me, how the advanced price of any commodity proves the depreciation of that, for which it is exchanged. A pipe of port wine costs now nearly three times as much as it cost 40 years ago. Is the value of the bank note, or the guinea, only one third of its value at that period? Why then is it contrary to common sense to suppose, that the medium is not

depreciated, merely because any commodity, rated in that medium, has advanced in value? Your observation involves the fallacy, which seems to pervade the whole of your reasoning. If gold coin be a standard, it is incapable of variation; it must be fixed, otherwise it is no standard. It is intended to show the fluctuations in the price of all commodities, as compared with its uniform and determinate value. These fluctuations it could not mark, if it were itself susceptible of variation. The standard value of gold coin is 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* per ounce; and gold coin is the medium, in which bullion and other commodities are estimated. Is gold coin then depreciated, because an ounce of bullion is sold not at 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* but at 4*l.* 10*s.*? Certainly not: gold coin, as a standard, cannot be depreciated: yet your argument, intended to prove the depreciation of bank paper, because the price of bullion has risen, would prove this also, and thus, by proving too much, would prove nothing.

If you reply, that no man would give 4*l.* 10*s.* for an ounce of gold bullion, when he could easily convert his 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* of gold coin into an ounce of bullion; I grant the pertinency of the reply. But what follows? View gold coin in this light, as either bullion, or convertible into bullion, and it ceases to be a standard. It can no more measure bullion, than a bushel of corn, as you say, can measure a bushel of corn. You must either then consider gold coin as a standard, and fixed measure of value, not convertible into bullion, on which supposition, bullion may rise considerably above *it*, as well as above the bank note; and, considering the question in this light, infer the depreciation of gold coin, and that of the bank note together: or, if you dislike this conclusion, take the other alternative, that gold coin is a mere commodity, being always convertible into bullion, and then your standard, and your argument built on that standard, respecting bullion being rated in coin, sink together; for coin then, by your own showing, loses its distinctive property, and must be regarded as bullion. Take either alternative, and I am satisfied: but the two must not be confounded.

You observe, that if the price of gold were estimated in silver, the price might rise to 4, 5, or 10*l.* an ounce, and it would itself be no proof of the depreciation of paper currency, but of an alteration in the relative value of gold and silver. Here, I conceive, you have stated a position perfectly just, but utterly irreconcileable with your own theory. You admit, that gold, estimated in silver, may rise more than 100 per cent. above it, while the silver, notwithstanding, is not depreciated; this being granted, I am desirous to know, why gold, as estimated in bank paper, may not rise 15 per cent. above it, the paper at the same time not being depreciated.

If the cases are not perfectly analogous, I wish to know, what are the points of difference. As far as I can discover, there is a manifest inconsistency in maintaining that silver in the one case is not depreciated, and that the bank note in the other suffers depreciation.

"But silver," you say, "is not the standard measure of value—granting, however, that it were," you observe, "as an ounce of gold is only worth in the market $15\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of silver, and as $15\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of silver are coined into 80 shillings, being equal to them in weight, an ounce of gold ought not to sell for more than 4*l.*"

This is one of those specious fallacies which, as they deceive the author, frequently elude also the detection of the reader. If it be intended, as its object seems to be, to show the depreciation of bank paper, it will totally fail you. It proceeds thus:

$15\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of silver $\pm$ 1 oz. of gold,

$15\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of silver $=$ 80 mint shillings,

therefore 1 oz. of gold $\pm$ 80 mint shillings, or 4*l.*, which, instead of 4*l.* 10*s.* should be the market price of an ounce of gold, even if it were rated in silver. The argument seems to carry with it the force of a mathematical demonstration. But here is the fallacy.

In order to prove the depreciation of bank paper, you seem to think it sufficient to show, that $15\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of silver are of the same market value as 80 mint shillings. But did it not occur to you, that, before any man would carry his $15\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of bullion to be coined into 80 shillings, he would naturally inquire, whether it would be of more value in a state of coin, than in a state of bullion? Did it not occur to you, that the market price of silver bullion was above the mint price, and that 80 mint shillings was in bullion worth more than in coin—worth more than 4*l.* You seem to have taken it for granted, that all which you had to do, was to prove an ounce of gold equivalent to 80 mint shillings, totally overlooking the most material point for consideration, namely, the market price of $15\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of bullion, or of 80 shillings, as convertible into bullion,—forgetting your own repeated observation, that in such cases gold and silver coin, if we take a just view of their character, must be regarded as bullion, and thus again proceeding on the same fallacy, silver being supposed the standard, as vitiates your argument, when you assume gold as the measure of value. You should have reflected, that to prove an ounce of gold to be equivalent to 80 mint shillings, is to prove not that bank paper was depreciated, but that gold, by rising in value, purchased more than its usual proportion of silver and bank paper. You should have reflected also, that an ounce of gold may be of the same value with 80 shillings, but that 80 shillings as convertible into bullion may be of more value than 4*l.* though the four pounds

may retain their usual relative value in relation to every other exchangeable commodity.

The market price of silver, you observe, is at present 5*s.* 9½*d.* per ounce, estimated in bank notes, the mint price being only 5*s.* 2*d.*; consequently, you say, the standard silver in 100*l.* is worth more than 112*l.* in bank notes. If this observation be offered to show the depreciation of bank paper, it will prove too much, for it will prove the depreciation of silver standard currency. If it is not offered with that view, it is foreign to the question. If it is offered in order to show the depreciation of bank paper, because it took 112*l.* in notes to buy 100*l.* of standard silver; the same argument will prove the depreciation of silver standard currency; for it would have taken 100 ounces of standard silver coin, to buy 90 ounces of bullion. And if in fact 100 ounces of standard silver coin were equivalent to 100 ounces of bullion, it was only because the former could be converted into the latter. The paper, representing 100 ounces of standard silver coin, could not be so converted into bullion. But could not bank paper, you may say, be converted into standard silver coin, and the coin into bullion? It could not. The former was not to be obtained; the market value of silver having been long higher than the mint price, the standard silver coin had almost wholly disappeared, and if more had been issued, it would have instantly shared the same fate. When you say, therefore, that the standard silver in 100*l.* was worth more than 112*l.* in bank paper, you might have added, and also more than 112*l.* in standard silver coin, thus proving the depreciation of silver standard currency. An argument, thus proving too much, proves nothing.

"It is said," you observe, "that the amount of bank notes has not increased in a greater proportion than the augmentation of our trade required, and therefore cannot be excessive." "This assertion," you say, "it would be difficult to prove." Would it not be equally difficult to evince its contrary, unless we were to reason in a circle, or to beg the question, first, assuming excessive issue, and then inferring depreciation, or assuming depreciation, and inferring excessive issue? You say, "the improvements, which we are making in the art of economising the use of the circulating medium by improved methods of banking, would render the same amount of notes excessive now, which were necessary for the same state of commerce at a former period." It is true; but do you not perceive, that it matters not, what improvements are devised and adopted,—that the term *excess* implies more than is necessary for the state of our commerce, these improvements being taken into account, and that, if no excess, all circumstances being considered, can be demonstrated, no depreciation can be warrantably affirmed?

You believe it probable, that from "the competition between the national and the provincial banks, the latter may have succeeded in displacing with their own notes a portion of the paper issued by the Bank of England." The fact would only show, that the same amount of notes continued in circulation; that there was no addition, and therefore no excess. Besides, I repeat, a greater issue does not prove an excessive issue.

Your observations in answer to the Edinburgh Reviewer, I consider to be entirely irrelevant—They are manifestly inapplicable to the circumstances of the case in question. You say, that a merchant will discharge a foreign debt, either with money or with goods, as either mode may appear most subservient to his advantage. It is true, interest is the main principle of all commercial transactions. But your proposition implies, that the merchant has a choice,—that he never acts from necessity. Are you warranted in assuming this to be a fact? If English commodities are prohibited on the Continent, will you explain to me, how a foreign debt is to be discharged by the exportation of English goods? There are few physical propositions more generally true, than that water will find its own level; but would he not be a bold dogmatist, who should maintain, that water, notwithstanding all obstructions, uniformly finds its own level? It may be equally true as a general position, that no merchant will discharge a debt with money, if he can more advantageously pay it with commodities; but it would argue extreme ignorance and perversity to maintain, that the exportation of commodities is always in his power. When English goods were excluded from the Continent, how was the Continental creditor to have his demands satisfied, but by English gold?

It is your leading and favourite position, that money is never exported, but by reason of its redundancy, and for the sole purpose of restoring the equilibrium. This theory appears to me radically false, and repugnant to fact. In the first place, this assumed equilibrium is a mere hypothesis; a mere fancy, having no real existence. You have been pleased to assume it as the basis of your argument; but you have not even attempted to prove its truth. On the contrary, I have shown, that, if we are to measure currency by commodities, or by labour, the best criterion of their value, such an equilibrium, as you suppose, neither does, nor ever did exist. This is a radical objection to your argument.[1]

But, if such an equilibrium, though occasionally disturbed, were in theory imagined generally to exist, the morally impossible consequences, to which the hypothesis would lead, would demon-

[1] This notion of an *equilibrium*, Mr. Ricardo, in his work on Political Economy, seems now to have abandoned.

strate its falsity. Let us suppose this equilibrium in the currency of commercial nations to be a matter of fact, and that each country has its proper quantity of specie, though how this quantity is to be ascertained, or determined, I am at a loss to know. Let us also maintain with you, that in this state of things, currency, not being redundant, (a complete equilibrium existing) cannot be exported. Let us suppose also, that one of those countries is visited with scarcity, nay threatened with famine, and that by reason of certain political obstructions, it is debarred the liberty of purchasing corn by the exportation of commodities. Well then, what is to be done? If your doctrine be true that money will not be exported, nay, never is exported, unless redundant, money cannot be exported to rescue them from starvation. So then we are to believe, that the nation would suffer itself to be subjected to all the horrors of famine, rather than export any part of its specie, because, forsooth, this would destroy the existing equilibrium, and currency among them was not redundant. Are we to believe this, or are we to reject, as false, a doctrine, which leads to such impossible consequences? Is such a theory consistent with reason? Is it to be reconciled with the common principles of human action? Would not a people, placed in such circumstances, export their last atom of gold,—their last mite of silver, rather than perish with hunger? If so, it is evident, that, contrary to your doctrine, gold may be exported, not by reason of redundancy of money, but from necessity.

In examining the question, whether bank paper has, or has not, been depreciated, it is highly necessary that we form clear and correct conceptions of the proper meaning of the term depreciation. With this view, I submitted to your consideration, what I apprehend to be the only accurate definition of the word in question. A due attention to this point would, I am inclined to think, have secured you against the misconception, under which you appear to me to labour.

Depreciation, as a general term, denotes a diminution of exchangeable value. Applied to labour and commodities, it signifies a reduction of price, or a depression of their marketable value, below the usual standard, or usual price, labour and commodities being estimated in money. The average price of wheat being supposed to have been, for a series of years, 70 shillings per quarter, if the price fell to 60, wheat would be said to have suffered depreciation. But as labour and commodities are estimated in money; so, conversely, the value of money is measured by labour, or commodities. Money, therefore, is said to be depreciated, when the same sum commands less than the usual quantity of these. Thus, when we compare the quantity of labour, or of commodities, which any given sum can now command, with the

quantity for which the same nominal sum was exchangeable fifty years ago, we find the quantity diminished, and therefore say, that money has suffered depreciation. Thus the term *depreciation* is applied to labour or commodities, when their price is reduced; and to money, when it is exchangeable for only a diminished quantity of labour, or commodities.

In order then to ascertain, whether our currency, or any part of it, has been depreciated, we have only to consider, whether it can purchase an equal quantity of labour and commodities, as usual. If it purchases a less quantity, it has suffered depreciation; if it retains its relative value in respect to these, it cannot be said to be depreciated. As the ratio between any quantity of labour or commodities, and any quantity of currency, taken as a whole, is not permanent, so the ratio usually subsisting among the component parts of our currency may be disturbed by a variety of circumstances. A greater or less quantity of gold, or a greater or less demand, may destroy the ratio, which it usually bears to silver, to copper, to the bank note, to labour, and to articles of consumption generally, while the other component parts of the currency retain their usual value in reference to one another, and also to labour and commodities. The same observation may be applied to the other parts of the currency. It is to be observed also, that the whole currency may be depreciated; an effect necessarily produced by war and taxation.

Here, then, I conceive, lies your error. Instead of taking labour, or instead of taking commodities, the next best criterion, as the measure of value,—instead of comparing silver coin, and bank paper with these, you compare them with gold. This, I contend, is to substitute a false for a true standard. The only real measure of value is acknowledged to be labour, and next to that, commodities of primary necessity, for which all labour is undertaken. But instead of taking labour as a measure of value, or commodities, the nearest to that in point of accuracy, you substitute gold coin, which, by reason of its fluctuating value, as being convertible into bullion, cannot possibly be regarded as a correct or uniform standard. Besides, let me ask, what constitutes the value of gold? Is it not its power to purchase labour and commodities? It is by these, therefore, and not gold, by which the real value of any exchangeable article is to be measured. Nor can any legislative enactment, establishing this or that standard, subvert this fundamental principle. Instead, however, of comparing the bank note with labour or commodities, the only just criterion of its worth, you compare it with gold; and because gold has risen above its usual ratio, in respect to silver, bank paper, and commodities, you think yourself justified in concluding, that bank paper is depra-

ciated. The deduction is false. It is derived from false principles.

Nay, the error does not stop here: it proceeds to absurdity: for you admit that, even if gold had risen in value, as you seem to doubt, still you would have maintained, that the bank note was depreciated, because it did not keep pace with the guinea in value. This I conceive to be of all paradoxical propositions one of the most extraordinary. Does the advanced price of one article or commodity prove the depreciation of another, when that other has not altered its value in relation to any other exchangeable commodity? To affirm this, I conceive, is to violate every acknowledged principle of reason, and grossly to pervert the meaning of terms. Nay your doctrine would lead to this absurdity, that, while the bank note was rising in value, if the guinea rose in a still higher ratio, the bank note suffered depreciation. Thus, while it was advancing in value, it was sinking in value. While it was commanding a more than usual quantity of labour and commodities, it was at the same time depreciating and commanding less. A more palpable contradiction cannot easily be conceived.[1]

[1] Mr. Ricardo, in his work on Political Economy, has remarked, "that the nations of the world must have been early convinced, that there was no standard of value in nature, to which we might unerringly refer, and therefore chose a medium, which on the whole appeared to them less variable than any other. To this standard," he says "we must conform, till the law is changed, and till some other commodity is discovered, by the use of which we shall obtain a more perfect standard. While gold is exclusively the standard in this country, money will be depreciated when a pound sterling is not of equal value with 5 dwts. 3 grs. of standard gold, and that, whether gold rises or falls in general value."

If this opinion did not, as I conceive, involve a manifest absurdity, it might pass for one of those paradoxical assertions, which none, but those initiated in the mysteries of Political Economy, could comprehend or explain. That the thing measured, if at one time of equal length with the standard, but, if afterwards found to be of less length, should be considered as shortened, is an obvious truth. But on what rational principle, we are to affirm it to be shortened, when it is afterwards found to be longer than the standard, it exceeds my power of understanding to comprehend. If a pound note cannot be exchanged for a *Sovereign*, Mr. Ricardo may contend, that the pound note is depreciated; but, if the pound note could purchase a *Sovereign* and a half, how the pound note, by rising in value above the standard, could suffer depreciation, I must leave it to the sagacity of Mr. Ricardo, to explain.

Mr. Ricardo admits, that gold may rise or fall in general value; and therefore acknowledges, that the standard is variable, but contends, notwithstanding, that money is depreciated, if a pound note is not at all times of equal value with 5 dwts. 3 grs. of standard gold. This is, in other words, to acknowledge, that the standard is not uniformly the same, and therefore not always right, but at the same time to contend, that whether right or wrong, we are always to consider it as right. The standard may have varied; the thing measured may have remained unchanged; but still we are to main-

You may urge, perhaps, that a bank note is an obligation to deliver a specified weight of gold coin. I am not prepared to affirm, that this position is false; though it has been questioned, whether the bearer of a bank note be entitled to a greater value for it, than he had the expectation of receiving, when it became his property, or than its value in gold, or silver, at the mint price. But, be it granted, that the Bank is bound, legally and morally, to deliver a certain sum in gold coin, whatever may be its intrinsic worth, for a given sum in bank notes; it is evident, that the mere obligation to deliver any commodity, in exchange for another, cannot sustain in a permanent state their relative value, as implied in the contract, nor prevent either article from rising or falling in value, at or before the period of delivery. It is manifest, that the obligation to pay 44½ guineas for 46*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* in bank notes, cannot prevent gold bullion, and consequently gold coin, from rising in value. And to affirm, that the bank note was depreciated,

tain what is not the fact—we are to assert, that the thing measured has varied, because the standard has varied; and why are we to affirm this absurdity? Because the statute law of the land has determined gold to be the standard. So then, we are to refer the distinction between truth and falsehood, between greater, equal, and less, not to the existing constitution of things, or to established and unalterable relations, but to the authority of an Act of Parliament. The Legislature may declare gold to be the best measure of value; but no Act of Parliament can make this or any thing else an invariable standard, which, from its own nature, or the urgent wants of mankind, is necessarily subject to continual change. Nor has any Act of Parliament yet declared, that gold is a correct and perfect measure of value; nor has it declared, that, when gold rises in value, or the standard varies, bank paper, or any commodity, measured by that standard, varies also. What egregious errors,—what confusion and perplexity would such a doctrine, if adopted in any science, necessarily produce! Let us take a familiar example. The barometer is acknowleged to furnish the most correct measure of the weight of the atmosphere; but it is liable to error, as affected by heat and cold. Let us suppose it placed in the shade—the mercury stands, at a certain height; let it be removed and exposed to a high degree of caloric, and the mercury rises. What should we think of the philosopher, who should maintain, that the weight of the atmosphere had increased? If we should venture to suggest to him, that the rise of the mercury was merely the effect of expansion—that no change had taken place in the thing measured, but in the measure itself, his answer would be, that as long as philosophers acknowledge the barometer to be the most accurate criterion of the weight of the atmosphere, and till a more correct measure is found, we must believe, and maintain, not that the mercury rose by expansion, but that the weight of the atmosphere had actually increased. Should we esteem this to be a correct judgment? a rational conclusion? Equally false is the doctrine, that, since gold has been established as the standard measure, we are to maintain, that commodities have changed their value, or the bank note has risen, or fallen, because an arbitrary and imperfect standard, by which they are measured, has acquired a greater, or sunk to a less value. A variation in the measure ought surely not to be confounded with a variation in the thing measured.

because it did not advance in the same ratio with gold bullion, is to affirm the absurdity, that *not to rise* and *to sink*, in other words, that a state of rest, and a state of motion, are things precisely identical.

It is true, that, if the Restriction Act had not taken place, bank paper being then exchangeable for gold, the value of bullion, and consequently of the guinea, would not have risen to 20 per cent. But the Bank being prohibited from paying its notes in cash, gold was with difficulty procured, and being in great demand, its value necessarily rose. Still, however, the bank note, though it ceased to be a representative of the value of a guinea in bullion, was still a representative of its mint or statute value, and was received as an equivalent in all commercial transactions. The guinea might rise to the value of 26 shillings, but the bank one pound note was still worth 20 shillings. And these 20 shillings, whether of equal or inferior weight to the standard prescribed by law, answered every useful purpose, as a measure of value, one person giving them to another at the same nominal value, at which he received them.

It appears from authentic documents, that an increased issue of paper currency has been accompanied with a rising exchange, and a diminished issue with a falling exchange. How these facts are to be reconciled with your theory it is difficult even to imagine. On the 1st of January 1781, the amount of bank notes in circulation was 6,794,620*l.*, and the exchange with Hamburg was 34.1. On the 1st of October of the same year, the amount of bank notes was diminished to 5,967,990*l.*, yet the exchange fell to 32.2. On the 1st of March 1782, the amount of bank notes in circulation was 9,160,000*l.* The issue was increased by nearly 5¼ millions; yet the exchange rose a little, namely, from 32.2 to 32.10. In December of the same year, the issue was diminished to 5,995,000*l.*, yet the exchange fell to 31.10.

Perceiving that the fact of a rising exchange with an increased issue of bank paper, in evidence of which fact, many more instances might be adduced, than are here offered,—perceiving, I say, that this fact is totally irreconcilable with your theory, you disclaim the opinion, that an increased issue of bank paper creates a permanently low exchange, because, you remark, the redundant and cheap currency will occasion the exportation of a portion of the coin, so as to restore the exchange to par.

When you offered this remark, did it occur to you, as a pertinent question, ought not the currency to be depreciated according to your theory, before the exportation of the coin takes place? The evil you acknowledge by the admission of its remedy. Yet it would appear from the facts now adduced, that this same evil, I mean the depreciation of the currency, or a depressed state of

exchange, was not created even for a short space of time, by an increased issue of bank paper. Agreeably to your doctrine, however, this effect ought to have been produced.

You deceive yourself, then, if you imagine, that this explanation serves in any degree to reconcile the facts now stated with your theory. It may be true, that a permanently redundant currency will occasion a permanently low exchange, and that the exportation of a certain portion of the coin would remedy the evil. But this is not the point in question. This is not the fact which you were called upon to explain. As a temporary excess of issue must, if your doctrine be true, occasion a temporary depression of exchange, you were required to show, how it has happened, consistently with your hypothesis, that an increased issue was accompanied with a rise, and a diminished issue with a fall, in the exchange. This is the fact, which it was incumbent on you to explain, and this fact you have prudently left unnoticed.

You observe, that, as guineas will be exported for restoring the exchange to par, the increase of small notes will ultimately be only a substitution of a paper for a metallic currency, and will not operate as an actual and permanent increase of circulation. It is answered; if they have no other effect, it amounts to a proof, that there was no excessive issue. The same observation is applicable to notes for 5*l*. In short, the argument may be briefly stated thus. An increased issue of notes either created redundancy, or it did not. If the affirmative is maintained, then according to your doctrine, a depression of exchange must have been the immediate effect: but, on the contrary, the increased issue was accompanied with a rise. The fact therefore disproves your theory. If no redundancy was created by the increased issue, then there was no excess, and therefore no depreciation of bank paper—This is the argument, and I know no means by which you can evade it.

Before I conclude my letter, I will briefly state my objections to your reasoning.

1st. You assume, as the basis of your argument, that an equilibrium of currency exists throughout the commercial world: and you maintain, that money is never exported from necessity, but from redundancy, in order to restore the equilibrium, after it has been disturbed: The existence of this equilibrium must be rejected, as a mere hypothesis. Unless it can be disproved, that labour is the only real measure of value, I contend, that this supposed equilibrium of currency neither does, nor ever did, exist.

2dly. You gratuitously assume gold, as the sole standard of value, though silver be equally acknowledged as such. The latter was legally as much a measure of value as gold, while practically

it was more so, much the greater number of our ordinary disbursements being made in silver.

Besides, permit me to ask, whether the gold or silver coin of this country has at any period been such, as to furnish, in respect to weight, a correct and precise standard. Five pounds in silver, before the late re-coinage, if paid in crowns, weighed 1 lb. 6 oz. 14 dwts. 7 grs.; if paid in half-crowns, weighed 1 lb. 5 oz. 8 dwts. 2 grs.; if paid in shillings, weighed 1 lb. 2 oz. 13 dwts. 9 grs.; if paid in sixpences, weighed 1 lb. 1 oz. 3 dwts. 3 grs. The mint weight of 44½ guineas, since the year 1770, has been one pound, and therefore the mint weight of one guinea has been 5 dwts. 3 grs. $\frac{14}{44}$. But has not the current guinea uniformly been acknowledged in all payments, as equal to twenty-one shillings, though weighing only 5 dwts. 8 grs.? Where then is that strict accuracy and precision, which it behoves every standard measure to possess?

Let me observe also, that, while gold and silver, each recognised as a standard, and being convertible into bullion, were continually changing their value in relation to each other, it may be pertinently inquired of those, who are perpetually referring us to a fixed standard, what is that standard to which they appeal. Not surely to one of the coins in exclusion of the other, for here both law and practice concur to oppose them; not possibly to both, for here absurdity would meet them, the two standards giving different results. "The moment," says Sir J. Steuart, "any measure begins to be measured by another, the proportion of which to it is not physically, perpetually, and invariably the same, all the usefulness of such a measure is lost."

3dly. You appear to me to reason in a circle. I find no argument to prove an excessive issue of bank notes, but an assumed depreciation; nor do I find any proof of depreciation, but a gratuitous standard, or an assumed excessive issue. Thus you seem chargeable with a circular argument, inferring depreciation from excessive issue, and excessive issue from depreciation.

4thly. You seem to reason inconsistently with your own principles. You admit that labour is the only real measure of value;[1] yet instead of comparing currency, or any component part of it with

[1] That labour is the only measure of value, is a proposition which most political economists concur in maintaining; but while they agree in terms, they differ in sentiment. Some, by this proposition, intend to express, that the labour, expended in the production of any commodity, determines its price, or exchangeable value; others, that the value of any commodity is to be estimated, by the quantity of labour which it can purchase or command. It is only in the latter of these senses, that I admit the truth of this propos-

labour, in order to ascertain its value, you compare one part with another, which you gratuitously assume as a standard. The different component parts of our currency, considered as such, cannot, unless by an act of arbitary power, interchange their relative values; for if one part be depreciated, all must suffer a proportionate depreciation; but as bullion, their relative value may be subject to all the fluctuations, to which all commodities are continually liable. By comparing gold, silver, and copper together, we may ascertain whether any and what change may have taken place, in the *ratio* of their values one to another; but their real worth is to be estimated, not by this *ratio*, but by the quantity of labour, which, in equal portions, they can severally command. But, in order to ascertain the value of silver, or the bank note, you compare them with gold bullion, or, which is tantamount, to gold coin, convertible into bullion, though you admit that labour, next to which I add commodities, is the only real measure of value. Gold, silver, or the bank note, may serve as a medium of exchange, circulating commodities, and determining their relative values; but the real worth of any article, by whatever sign it may be expressed, is the quantity of labour which it can command, or the quantity of commodities of primary necessity which it can purchase.

It is doubtless true that labour, though the only correct measure of value, cannot, for obvious reasons, be employed as an instrument of commerce, being incapable of performing all those functions, necessarily required in a medium of exchange. Some standard, therefore, more convenient, must necessarily be adopted; but if it is hoped, that any substantial or physical standard can be devised, which in extreme cases will answer all the purposes of foreign and internal traffic, the hope is visionary. A physical or substantial standard, in order to become a measure of value throughout the commercial world, must possess high intrinsic worth, and hence the precious metals have been universally preferred; and if like these it possess a great intrinsic value, its exchangeable power will, it is to be apprehended, notwithstanding all statutory restrictions, vary according to the fluctuations of its substantial worth. An ideal standard, not subject to these fluctuations, may however be adopted. Of its possibility indeed, no doubt can be

tion. The labour employed in the production of any commodity, is a measure merely of what it cost to the manufacturer; but is no certain criterion either of its utility, or its exchangeable value. The fancies and tastes of mankind, ever varying and capricious, necessarily also affecting the demand, the nature likewise of the commodities themselves, as having suffered quicker or slower decay, must necessarily affect their exchangeable worth, as estimated by a former and a present demand,—by the labour which they once cost, and the labour which they can now purchase. It is the latter only, which determines their value.

entertained; for the florin banco, denominated by Steuart *an ideal unit*, furnishes an example, that such a standard might be advantageously employed. To this standard, I conceive that our bank note may be regarded as an approximation. But, as it was not my intention to undertake any scientific discussion of the principles which pertain to the science of money, but strictly to confine myself to the limits prescribed by your pamphlet, I must forbear from entering more fully into this subject.

5thly. If your argument proves any thing, it proves too much. If the bank note was depreciated, because it did not rise in value with gold bullion, then it follows, that silver coin also, just as much a standard or measure of value as gold coin, suffered depreciation, not having advanced in value, in the same ratio with gold.

6thly. Your notion of depreciation appears to me not only incorrect, but absurd. It is incorrect; as not implying a diminution of exchangeable value, either of currency for labour and commodities, or of these for currency. You do indeed admit, that a real depreciation of gold and silver coin is demonstrated by an advanced price of all other commodities, thus acknowledging that their real value is estimated by commodities; but this only serves to evince the inconsistency of your reasoning. For, though you acknowledge that the real value of coin is measured by commodities, you deny that the bank note, the representative of coin, is to be estimated by the same criterion.

But your notion of depreciation involves also an absurdity; for it leads to this conclusion, that bank notes would be depreciated, though commanding a greater quantity of labour and commodities than usual, and therefore rising in value, and that they are at the same time sinking, as not being exchangeable for the usual quantity of bullion.

You may answer, that I have here assumed labour, and commodities, as the measure of value. It is true; and you concur with me in believing, that labour is the only real measure of value, and that the advanced price of commodities demonstrates a real depreciation of currency, thus measuring currency by commodities. But let us examine the question with a little more precision.

Every standard must be definite and invariable. If we are desirous to find a correct and permanent standard of measures, we fix on some determinate and unchangeable line, either, for example, the length of a pendulum vibrating seconds in a given latitude, or a degree of the meridian, at a given distance from the equator. This standard line, when once determined, is divided into parts, and a certain ratio between the whole and these parts severally, is established: Let us take the length of a pendulum,

vibrating seconds in the latitude of London, which is 39,126 inches. For the sake, however, of simplifying the illustration, let the length be supposed to be 36 inches, and that to this standard measure we give the name of *yard*. This we divide into three equal parts, each called a foot, and this again into twelve equal parts, each called an inch. The standard is a fixed and invariable quantity; and as long as the foot is $\frac{1}{3}$ and the inch $\frac{1}{36}$ of the standard measure, they evidently continue of the same ratio in respect to one another. But, if the foot were reduced to nine inches, we should then say that the foot had suffered diminution, or depression, its ratio to the yard or standard having been reduced from $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$. So far, you and I cannot but agree. Let us now proceed to the application. You assume the guinea as the standard of value; and though silver and gold coin were equally recognized by law, as standards, I will admit, for the sake of argument, that a guinea was the sole statute measure of value. Now, before we proceed, it must be observed, that depreciation being a relative term, we can neither affirm nor deny its existence, till the ratio between the standard and its several component parts shall have been precisely defined, and also the customary ratio between them, and what they are employed to measure. The former ratio is fixed by law. A penny is $\frac{1}{1008}$, a sixpence $\frac{1}{42}$, a shilling $\frac{1}{21}$, and a pound, as the representative of twenty shillings, is $\frac{20}{21}$ of the guinea, or standard. As long then as these component parts of the standard severally retain their just ratios to that standard, they cannot be said to suffer depression. If the ratio of the shilling, or of the one pound note, sunk below its established ratio to the standard or guinea, as the foot was supposed to sink from $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ of the standard yard, we should then say, that it had lost part of its value, and had suffered depreciation. But while the just ratio subsists between them, depreciation is an impossibility—a manifest contradiction. Show then, that the bank note has sunk below the standard, and you prove your point. But, while you attempt this, you are not to be permitted to alter the standard, and to vary its dimensions, as the price of bullion varies. To do this would be, as Steuart observes, to exemplify the folly of the boy, who uniformly called his foot a foot measure, though his foot was gradually increasing in length. Or it might be compared to the conduct of a man, who (to revert to the supposition of the pendulum,) should say, taking an inch to be $\frac{1}{36}$ of a pendulum vibrating seconds on the equator, as a standard, that an inch of gold wire, measured at the equator, had been shortened, because it was less than an inch or $\frac{1}{36}$ of a pendulum vibrating seconds at the pole. Prove that 3*l.* 17*s.* 10$\frac{1}{2}$*d.* in bank notes were not equal in value to an ounce of gold coin, considered as a standard,

and you prove your point. But in order to prove this, you will not be allowed to abandon your standard, first fixing it, then unfixing it—first assuming an unchangeable measure of value, and then assuming that measure to be changeable,—considering gold as coin, and at the same time as bullion, thus constituting it a standard, and yet not a standard. This will not be permitted. Either say, that bullion rose above the standard, whence it follows, that the bank note did not fall; or assume bullion as the standard, and then it follows, that the guinea and the bank note were both depreciated. But to say, that bank paper suffered depreciation, because it did not keep pace with the value of bullion, or with the guinea, as convertible into bullion, is an abuse of language.

Depreciation, whether we consult its etymological meaning, or its common acceptation, if it signify any thing, must sign[illegible] in value,—a depression below some standard level, so[illegible] definite point. If it is not so employed, the term is p[illegible]ted. But can a thing be said to sink, merely because it does not rise? Is a commodity depreciated, because it does not advance in price? Was the bank note depressed, because gold bullion was raised? Or can any person, without being chargeable with palpable impropriety, apply the terms *de*pression, *de*preciation, *de*position, *de*throncment, *de*scent, *de*jection, and many other analogous terms, which might be specified, to a thing which has remained stationary? Common usage forbids such application. You cannot be permitted, therefore, to pervert the meaning of words, to assume depreciation, where there is no depression, or to say, that a thing sinks, because it does not rise. Much less will you be allowed to say, that a bank note, though rising in value, sinks in value, merely because it does not keep pace with bullion, or the guinea, as convertible into bullion; for this is a gross and manifest contradiction.

It is in vain to object, that I have here presumed, as a matter of fact, that the price of bullion rose. The fact is incontrovertible. That the value of gold is subject to fluctuation, and has, on various occasions, risen considerably above the mere expense of exportation, is a truth, which cannot be questioned, without doubting the testimony of experience.[1] To dispute it, indeed, is to relinquish your own theory. For you must either show, that gold is not a commodity, or admit, that it is subject to the general law of demand and supply.

If you say, that you do not mean to contend for the guinea, as

[1] It is in evidence before the Bullion Committee, on the authority of Mr. Baring, a gentleman of the most extensive commercial connexions, that he could not have procured 10,000 ounces of gold, if he had offered a premium of 50 per cent.

an invariable or correct standard, I answer, that you must then abandon your standard entirely, or leave your argument in that equivocal state, which precludes even the possibility of any evidence, which can be supposed to amount to satisfactory proof. Besides, let me repeat, that the guinea has never been recognised in this country, as the sole statute measure of value. A standard must be invariable, or its utility is lost. If I assume, as a standard linear measure a yard of common catgut, which the humidity of the atmosphere contracts, and aridity expands, and if I am desirous to ascertain with accuracy, what degree of expansion or contraction, heat or cold may have produced in a brass rod, how am I to discover, by the application of the rod to this variable standard, whether the rod has varied, or the cord, or neither, or both? To propose a variable standard as a correct measure of value, is to offer an *ignis fatuus* to direct the traveller's steps.

Again; you do not seem to be aware, that your adoption of a variable standard would place you in a dilemma, from which no ingenuity could possibly extricate you. If the guinea be the standard, and if this standard is variable, it must vary either in relation to something *ab extra*, something exterior to itself, or *ab intra*, in reference to itself simply. One or other of these positions must be true. If the standard vary in respect to something exterior to itself, then that exterior something, and not the guinea, must be the standard. If it vary in relation to itself, then there must be a point—a *zero*, at which the guinea is at its standard level, and from which point the variation must be computed. Have you defined this point? Have you determined the level? The definition would have shown, that your argument is illogical. Take the mint value of the guinea as that point, or as the standard level, and the falsity of your doctrine is instantly detected. In short, view your argument in every light—turn it on every side, and whether you admit the fact, that gold and silver were equally recognised as standards, or whether you assume, what was not the fact, that gold coin was the sole legal standard, or whether you take the guinea, as a variable, or an invariable measure of value, your argument is sophistical, and the conclusion false.

7thly. Your mode of reasoning is of that species which may not inaptly be denominated, *ambidexter*. At one time, you acquaint us, that, in order to form correct notions on the science of money, it is necessary to consider coin, as a mere commodity. At another time, you represent gold coin, as a standard of value. There can exist no reasonable objection to your considering guineas in both these lights, provided, in whichsoever of them you view the subject, the conclusion shall be consistent with that view. But in one and the same argument, you regard them as coin, yet reason, as if they

were bullion; and then again consider them as bullion, and therefore a mere commodity, and yet argue, as if they were coin, or a measure of value. It is difficult sometimes to combat with an opponent, who is completely master of this species of ambidexterity, especially, if his argument be not formally, or logically stated. For, if we show him, that guineas, considered as coin, cannot alter their value, and that the bank note, while it represents this value, cannot be depreciated, his answer is ready—he considers them as bullion. If, on the other hand, we contend, that guineas, being convertible into bullion, are a mere commodity, and may rise in certain circumstances considerably above the mint price, and therefore cease to be a measure of value, his answer is equally ready—he considers them as coin, and a legal standard. This species of argument is illegitimate. It may serve to perplex, and confound; but can never contribute to conviction.

Again—I have already alleged, that you assume one hypothesis without evidence of its truth; it may now be observed, that you assume another, which, though it may be generally true, is not universally supported by fact. You maintain, that the exchange cannot rise more above, or fall more below par, than the expences, attending the exportation of the precious metals. This theory is contradicted by experience. In the year 1760, the exchange between London and Hamburgh was 7 per cent. in favour of London. The expence of transporting the precious metals, could not exceed half this sum. From the year 1780 to 1784, the exchange with Hamburgh was from 5 to 8 per cent. against England, though the expence of sending specie to Hamburgh could not exceed 4 per cent. In the year 1695 remittances were made to Flanders at 20 per cent. loss; and though a new coinage was issued in the year following, which, according to the theory of the Bullion Committee, should have raised the exchange, remittances were made at 25 per cent. loss; more than six times the expence of transporting the precious metals.[1]—These facts are in direct opposition to your assumption, that an unfavourable exchange never can exceed the expences, attending the exportation of the precious metals.

But, if your position were admitted, as generally true, it would be totally inapplicable to the political and commercial state of this country, at the period in question, and could not therefore, without manifest impropriety, be adduced in confirmation of your argument.

In the ordinary state of things, I agree with you in thinking,

[1] See Mr. Vansittart's Speech, delivered on the 13th of May, 1811.

that the expence of transporting the precious metals constitutes the *maximum* above or below *par*, in the rate of exchange. But to this general rule extreme cases present themselves as exceptions. While bank notes are not commutable for specie, and the balance of payments are, to a large amount, against us, the rate of exchange may rise considerably above the *maximum* here stated.

You may reply, "Is not this an admission, that the unfavourable exchange was occasioned by the stoppage of cash payments at the Bank?" I conceive, it is not; nor can it be regarded as such, unless we are to affirm, that a disease is created by the absence of the remedy, which might have served, for a little, to counteract its effect. The state of exchange, as favourable, or unfavourable, in other words, the balance of payments, has not, nor can have, the most remote connection with cash payments at the Bank. These, perhaps, might have for a short time contributed to supply the English merchant with gold, to discharge his foreign debts, and might have thus for a little checked the advancing price of bullion; but the evil, thus repressed, would have soon recoiled with tenfold violence. The bank, for its own protection, would have been compelled to contract its issues, within a very narrow compass; the provincial banks must have been reduced to the same necessity; and can any man contemplate without trembling, the fatal consequences, which must have resulted from this measure. I leave the picture for your own imagination to draw. The agriculturist, the manufacturer, the merchant, the tradesman, must have sunk together in one common ruin. And amidst the wrecked fortune of thousands of individuals, national faith, commercial confidence, and public tranquillity would have sustained a shock, from which ages might have elapsed before they recovered.

Fully persuaded as I am, of the rectitude of your principles, and the purity of the motives, by which you are actuated, both as an author, and as a man,—firmly convinced, that neither you, Sir, nor the Bullion Committee, were aware of the disastrous effects, which might have followed the general adoption of your opinions, nay believing, that no person would have deplored these effects more deeply than yourself, I fully acquit you of any injurious or unpatriotic intention. But the doctrine, which you maintained, was eagerly seized by discontented and designing men, who seemed to rejoice in the propagation of a theory, which, by annihilating the credit of the Bank, depreciating national securities, shaking public faith, and creating universal distress, would have hurried the country beyond the verge of bankruptcy and ruin. But, while I give you full credit for the rectitude of your intentions, I must take the liberty to remark, that, before an hypothesis, pregnant

with such incalculable evils, was delivered to the public, it should have possessed in its defence little short of mathematical, or the clearest metaphysical, evidence. Happy was it for the country, that the opposite doctrine obtained general assent, and that the hypothesis of the Bullion Committee, was regarded merely as a specious, but ill-founded speculation. Subsequent events have proved the general opinion to have been correct.

I should do injustice to you, Sir, as well as to my own convictions, if I concluded my letter, without assuring you, that I entertain the highest sense of your candour, your integrity, and your love of truth: and if any observation has escaped me, which can admit a construction repugnant to these convictions, you cannot censure it with more severity, than I shall be disposed to condemn itmyself.

Accept my assurances of regard, believing me,

Sir,

Yours, &c. &c.

ALEX. CROMBIE.

Greenwich, April 7th, 1817.

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desirable?

On the contrary, extraordinary as it may seem, the magnitude will be found in the whole progress. THE WORLD *knows* AND *feels* THE EXISTING EVILS: IT WILL LOOK AT THE NEW ORDER OF THINGS PROPOSED—APPROVE—WILL THE CHANGE—AND IT IS DONE.

Who, or what, shall now prevent man from being well trained, instructed, and productively employed? Who, or what, shall now prevent him from being so trained, instructed, and employed, amidst every comfort and enjoyment, when it shall be proved, even to demonstration, that all, ***without a single exception***, shall be essentially benefitted by the change?

To proceed systematically in the subject, it is necessary here to state what man is by nature; what he has been made by the previous circumstances which have surrounded him; and afterwards to shew what he may be made, by surrounding him with new circumstances, all of which are now at the controul of society.

Man, then, is born with combined propensities and qualities, differing in degree of power and in combination, sufficient to create, through life, individuality and distinctness of person and character.

But however much the power and combination of these propensities and qualities may differ in individuals at birth, they may be all so directed, by subsequent circumstances, as to be made to form general characters; and these characters to be of any, of the most opposite nature—even to be made entirely ***irrational***, or ***rational***.

The progress shall now be slightly traced, as well as the means, by which the first has been completely effected: and a hasty sketch shall also be given, by which the last may, with equal certainty, be accomplished.

In every known region of the earth, up to the present hour, man has been compelled, from infancy, to receive the peculiar notions of some sect, some class, some party, and of some country. In consequence, each individual has been surrounded by four dense atmospheres of error and prejudice, and through which he must look at every object around him. These mental atmospheres vary materially in different countries; but in all they are so dense, that (as every object must be observed through them) each object becomes distorted, or indistinct; none of them, in any country, or by a single individual, can yet be seen in their just proportions; and, in consequence, nature has hitherto been hidden from man.

Throughout all past ages, a limited number of individuals, on various spots of the earth, have been surrounded with atmospheres, the shades of which have been more or less differently combined; and each of these combinations has presented to the individual, within its influence, a particular distortion

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receive, and his hand ready to assist, each of his fellow-creatures, whatever may be his sect, his class, his party, his country, or his colour. Anger, hatred, and revenge, will have no place on which to rest: the pabulum on which all the evil passions fed, will no longer exist: unity and mutual co-operation, to any extent, will become easy of execution, and the common practice of all.

Men will soon read their past history, only to retain a remembrance of the errors and inconsistencies from whence they emerged; and to compare the happiness around them with the misery of former times.

Look now at the drawing exhibited, and compare the scenes, which it but faintly represents, with the situation of the existing poor and working classes in the manufacturing towns; and yet the expense and trouble of the latter are tenfold those of the one represented. We will very hastily and slightly sketch the contrast.

IN THE MANUFACTURING TOWNS	IN THE PROPOSED VILLAGES
The poor and working classes now usually live in garrets or cellars, within narrow lanes or confined courts.	The poor and working classes will live in dwellings formed into a large square, rendered in every way convenient, and usefully ornamented.
They are surrounded with dirt, enveloped in smoke, and they have seldom a pleasant object on which to fix their eye.	They will be surrounded by gardens, have abundance of space in all directions to keep the air healthy and pleasant: they will have walks and plantations before them, within the square, and well-cultivated grounds, kept in good order around, as far as the eye can reach.
Parents are oppressed with anxiety to secure the means of subsistence for themselves and children.	In consequence of the principle of mutual co-operation being understood and practised to its full extent, the necessaries and comforts of life are enjoyed by all in abundance.
Each family has the care and trouble of going to market, to supply their individual wants, and under every disadvantage.	Under the proposed arrangements the same trouble will provide for 1000 as it now requires for one family; and all articles are procured on the best terms.
Each family must have domestic arrangements for cooking, &c. and one person must be wholly occupied in preparing provisions, &c. for a family of ordinary numbers.	The best provisions will be cooked in the best manner under arrangements that will enable five or six individuals to prepare provisions for 1000.
The parents must toil from 10 to 16 hours in the day, to procure the wretched subsistence which they obtain for themselves and children, and very often under circumstances the most unfavoura-	The parents will be beneficially and pleasantly occupied not more than eight hours in the day.

(continued from first page.)

dered secure, beyond the power of accident. Combined labour and expenditure, for a common object, among the working classes, with proper training and instruction for their offspring, and surrounded by the circumstances devised for the whole, will create and secure the present safety of society, the present and future comfort and happiness of the individuals, and the ultimate well-being of all. I may therefore confidently believe, that no combination of human powers can now be formed to prevent its permanent adoption.

After having made this statement, it is necessary for me to add, that the knowledge I have acquired on this subject has been forced upon me by a long and extensive experience; which, under similar circumstances, would have been acquired by the generality of mankind. None, I believe not one, of the principles have the least claim to originality; they have been repeatedly advocated and recommended, by superior minds, from the earliest period of history. I have no claim even to priority, in regard to the *combinations* of these principles in theory; this belongs, as far as I know, to John Bellers, who published them, and most ably recommended them to be adopted in practice, in the year 1696. Without any aid from actual experience, he has most distinctly shewn how they might be applied to the improvement of society, according to the facts then known to exist; thus evincing that his mind had the power to contemplate a point extended 120 years beyond his contemporaries. His work appeared to be so curious and valuable, that, on discovering it, I have had it reprinted, verbatim, in order to bind up with the papers I have written on the same subject.

Whatever merit can be due to an individual for the original discovery of a plan that, in its consequences, is calculated to effect more substantial and permanent benefit to mankind than any ever yet perhaps contemplated by the human mind, it all belongs exclusively to John Bellers.

Q. Is it then your decided opinion, that land, labour, and capital, may be employed under a new combination, so as to produce more valuable results to all parties than they do at present?—A. If I have derived any distinct knowledge by my long experience and extensive practice, I am enabled to say, with a confidence that fears no refutation, that any given quantity of land, labour, and capital, may be so combined as to support at least four times the present number of human beings, and in tenfold comfort that the same maintains at present, under the existing practices in this country; and, of course, that the intrinsic value of land, labour, and capital, may be increased in the same proportion: that, consequently, we possess the most ample means to carry now, without loss of time, the prosperity of the country to a point it has not before attained—to a height that no country has ever yet experienced. If any parties suppose these to be mere assertions without sound foundation, or to be a visionary scheme derived from the regions of fancy, they will be mistaken; for they are the result of a patient and unwearied attention to discover accurate and practical data, and to try an endless variety of experiments, to enable me to draw correct conclusions, and thus bring the theories of learned men in their closets to the only test of truth. By thus proceeding, I have been more and more satisfied of the errors of mere theories, and of the little real value they have hitherto been to mankind. I have no wish, however, that any more confidence should be placed in what I say, than to induce the public to give a fair trial to the plan. If I am in error, the loss and inconvenience, compared with the object, will be small; but if I am right, the public and the world will be gainers indeed! I ask nothing for myself; and except good-will and the interchange of kind and friendly

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late Quantity of Land; and at due distances, other Villages of a similar description.

ise of Commons on the Poor Laws, in the Session of 1817.

e school they shall be well instructed in all necessary and ul knowledge; that every possible means should be adopted event the acquirement of bad habits from their parents herwise; that no pains shall be spared to impress upon such habits and dispositions as may be most conducive eir happiness through life, as well as render them useful valuable members of the community to which they belong. is proposed that the women should be employed, in the place, in the care of their infants, and in keeping their ings in the best order. 2dly, In cultivating the gardens ise vegetables for the supply of the public kitchen. 3dly, tending to such of the branches of the various manufac- as women can well undertake; but not to be employed em more than four or five hours in the day. 4thly, In ng up clothing for the inmates of the establishment. In attending occasionally, and in rotation, in the public en, mess-rooms, and dormitories; and, when properly cted, in superintending some parts of the education of ildren in the schools.

s proposed that the elder children should be trained to in gardening and manufacturing, for a portion of the day, ling to their strength; and that the men should be em- d, all of them, in agriculture, and also in manufactures, other occupation for the benefit of the establishment.

SCHEDULE *of* EXPENSES *for forming an Establishment for* TWELVE HUNDRED MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN.

If the land be purchased,

1200 acres of land, at 30*l.* per acre	£36,000
Lodging apartments for 1200 persons	17,000
Three public buildings within the square	11,000
Manufactory, slaughter-house, and washing-house	8,000
Furnishing 300 lodging-rooms, at 8*l.* each	2,400
Furnishing kitchen, schools, and dormitories	3,000
Two farming establishments, with corn-mill, malting, and brewing appendages	5,000
Making the interior of the square and the roads	3,000
Stock for the farm under spade cultivation	4,000
Contingencies and extras	6,600
	£.96,000

which, being divided by 1200, gives a capital to be advanced of 80*l.* per head; or, at 5 per cent. per ann. 4*l.* each per year.

Thus, at so small an expense as a rental of 4*l.* per head, may the unemployed poor be put in a condition to maintain themselves; and as may be easily conceived, quickly to repay the capital advanced, if thought necessary.

But, if the land be rented, only 60,000*l.* capital would be required.

from a distance to see their friends and relatives. In the

converse with them at meals, and all other proper times: that before they

(*Continued from third page.*)

; and afterwards to propose them separately for your opinion and decision.

1. That many of the poor and working classes, in Great Britain and Ireland, cannot now procure employment to enable them to earn a proper subsistence.

2. That in Great Britain and Ireland, the poor, the unemployed, and the inefficiently employed, are now supported at a ruinous expense to many parishes, and by extensive and injurious private charities.

3. That under these circumstances, the poor and working classes generally experience privations and distress to a greater extent, probably, than they have suffered at any former period in the history of this country.

4. That this arises from manual labour, being of less value now, compared with the price of provisions, and the habits of the people generally, than it has been at any former known period.

5. That it is not probable manual labour can regain its proper and necessary value, under circumstances beneficial to the country, unless other arrangements shall be formed by society, purposely devised to give productive employment to all who are competent and willing to labour.

6. That it is the highest practical point in political economy, as it most essentially involves the well being and happiness of all ranks, to attain the means by which the labour of any country can be the most advantageously employed.

7. To reduce the Poors' Rate, and to gradually abolish Pauperism, with all its degrading and injurious consequences.

8. That as a solemn and grave judgment ought not to be given hastily, on a subject in which the vital interests of this Empire and other countries are involved,—the plan now proposed shall be submitted to the scrutiny and investigation of a Committee, composed of many of the leading, most intelligent, and best disposed, from among all ranks, who, by their previous acquirements, may be competent to give a useful opinion upon the subject. For something must be done.

9. That the Committee of General Investigation be composed of the following Noblemen and Gentlemen, or such of them as may be inclined to perform this high and important duty, for themselves, their country, and for posterity. The Committee to have power to add from time to time to their number, and to be a quorum.

10. That this Committee shall report the result of their investigations and labours, to a General Meeting to be called for that purpose, early in May next year, or sooner, if they shall so determine.

11. That the Proposer of the Plan shall give, from time to time, to the Committee, all the information in his power, that they may ask or require.

It was not my intention to have proceeded further at present; but a most benevolent and public-spirited Gentleman, whose name I am not at liberty yet to mention, called upon me late last night, and, in the most liberal manner, made me an unlimited offer of about 1500 acres of land, proper in all respects to try one experiment upon, and of at least 50,000*l.* in value, which I might use for such purpose, at any time after October next. I cannot, therefore, refrain from proposing the following additional Resolutions:—

12. That it is now most desirable, one or more experiment should be tried, with the least possible loss of time.

13. That for this purpose a subscription be now opened, that whenever 100,000*l.* in money or land shall be subscribed, one experiment shall be commenced forthwith, and a second when 200,000*l.* shall be subscribed; and so on, as each following 100,000*l.* shall be subscribed.

14. That the following Gentlemen, or such of them as may be inclined to act, shall be a Select Acting Committee, to direct and superintend such experiments, assisted by the proposer of the plan.

15. That the most warm and cordial thanks of this meeting be given to the Gentleman who has so nobly stept forward to offer his Land to the Country, for the use of an experiment, at the moment it was wanted.

49, Charlotte-Street, Portland-Place, Aug. 16.

MR. EDITOR,

As the adjourned Public Meeting to consider "A Plan to relieve the country from its present distress," &c. is to be held on Thursday next, at the City of London Tavern, it is important that the public should be put in possession of the following, with the least possible delay. Your early insertion of it, therefore, will confer another favour on, Sir, yours obliged,

R. OWEN.

The First Public Meeting, to consider *A Plan of amelioration, and reformation without revolution,* has passed, under circumstances [illegible] individual, directly [illegible] and prejudices of [illegible] State—I called that [illegible] the real tendency o[illegible] tered by the influen[illegible] fore purposely wer[illegible] Mr. Rowcroft and [illegible] experience in publi[illegible] don, than perhaps a[illegible] Secretary to the C[illegible] Relief of the Man[illegible] which Committee [illegible] originated); and t[illegible] greater knowledge i[illegible] tleman, his services [illegible] measures about to [illegible] men I entered the [illegible] to leave the choice [illegible] ing, for to *me* it wa[illegible] Mr. Rowcroft reque[illegible] then appeared to b[illegible] contain) to appoint [illegible] was immediately ca[illegible] other was put into [illegible] and gave the best [illegible] state of his health [illegible] situation." It, ther[illegible] plation, for a momen[illegible] an honest devotion [illegible] rience, and very stro[illegible] greatly tried by sev[illegible] dual (partially acqua[illegible] fore the meeting) p[illegible] certainly entitled to [illegible] he acquiesced in the [illegible] out knowing one ser[illegible] one resolution that [illegible] took the chair, read [illegible] I had prepared for t[illegible] that in consequence [illegible] plications by letter, [illegible] some days previous [illegible] my preparations for [illegible] copy of them, as it [illegible] eleven o'clock in th[illegible] stances the business [illegible] then, however, as I [illegible] that the subject woul[illegible] tinue to do so, whate[illegible] may intervene.

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